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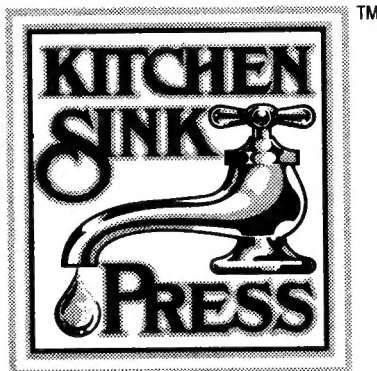
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BRUTARIAN 18

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Stately States

Confessions Of A Video Vixen

FICTION & POETRY

Blessed Rage (illus. Scott Herren)

The House That Ate People (illus. Dave Kocher)

Poetry Page

FEATURES

John Bergin: Aesthetic Terrorist

9 Lb Hammer: No Rednecks On These Boys

CRITICISM

Onan Jr. on Sleaze


Ozzy Fide on le cinema current

Brutarian Library

Audio Depravation

ART

*Mort Todd (Front Cover & Comic), Danny Hellman,
Doug Allan, Gary Leib, Derf, Mike Kupperman,
Jarrett Huddleston (All over the place), dom*



The great object
of life is sensation-
to feel that we exist,
even though in pain.
It is this "craving void"
which drives us to
gaming—to battle—to
travel—to intemperance,
but keenly felt pursuits
of any description,
whose principal attrac-
tion is the agitation
inseparable from
their accomp-
lishment.

Byron, 1813



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DEATH AND THE MAIDEN

There seems to be an epidemic invading the X-rated film industry. No, it isn't AIDS. It's suicide. In the past year, three performers have taken their own lives. First, there was Savannah in July of 1994. Then came Cal Jammer in early 1995. A few months later, Alex Jordan was found hanging in her closet, dressed in her S&M finest. Although Jordan's body had been discovered on July 2, the coroner estimates she'd been dangling there for days.

When Savannah burst onto the porn scene, she became a superstarlet almost immediately. She possessed the curvaceous blonde good looks which always seem to endear fans. It didn't matter that she was undependable, childish and had a penchant for pulling "no shows." Or that she was sometimes blase (but always beautiful) in her hardcore scenes. Stories circulated about her drug abuse. Savannah was so temperamental that she even refused to work with a well-loved legend like Joey

Silvera. (All the girls love Joey.) "I like young guys with long hair," she giggled in explanation.

Indeed, this preference was more than evident in Savannah's private life. At eighteen (and pre-porn) she was Gregg Allman's love doll. There were other much-publicized affairs with Guns 'N' Roses guitarist Slash, Billy Idol, David Lee Roth and rock personality turned actor Paulie Shore. The list goes on and on. Savannah had a brief contract with Vivid Video, one of the biggest adult names in the business, but she was soon dropped because of her undependability. After a minor car wreck in which Savannah smashed her cheekbones and nose, she put a gun to her head and ended her life.

Cal Jammer had probably been active in the porn industry at least a decade before he blew his brains out on his ex-

-wife's front lawn. The thing I remember most about him when we met at a video convention in 1993 was that he had the wounded eyes of a boy who'd been taunted by his schoolmates. Jammer tried too hard to make people like him. He was overly nice, ceremoniously kissing the hands of the ladies he was introduced to. I felt sorry for him.

Jammer's hypersensitivity led to "wood" problems (jizz biz slang for achieving and maintaining erections). His dyslexia, which he constantly struggled to hide, didn't garner him decent acting roles and his delivery of dialogue was often stilted and unnatural. Still, Jammer was accommodating and well liked. People hired him for pretty surfer boy roles which didn't require Shakespearean skill. That was until the wood gave out. Then he gave out.

Although Jammer and Savannah's insecurities were well known, legendary Alex Jordan was thought to be one of the most stable performers in the industry. From 1991 until her death in mid 1995, she graced over 166 sexvids. Bright-eyed, intelligent and coltishly attractive, she was an extremely capable actress and an athletic, spirited erotic performer. In 1993, Jordan was named Adult Video News' starlet of the year (an award which coincidentally had previously been given to Savannah). Despite this dubious honor, the porn powers that be didn't consider her "box cover material" and thus her job opportunities waned. Because of this, Jordan's view of the industry soured. She made a number of bondage and specialty videos. Her sexual swan song was in Gang Bang Girl 16 in which she parachutes into a remote spot and proceeds to have sex with ten men.



The events surrounding Jordan's death remain sketchy. Reference was made to a suicide note, the whereabouts of which are unknown. Apparently, she was despondent about the death of a pet bird. Things were also stormy with her husband who lived in Colorado while

Jordan continued making her residence in Marina Del Rey. (Where she was reportedly planning to join him and open a ski school.) What led to the corpse the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department found hanging from a pole in a walk-in closet, handcuffs dangling from her left wrist, a clothesline and a purple dress tie knotted around her throat? At first, it was suspected this was all part of an S&M game, asphyxiation play. But the possibility that Jordan was willingly suspended in the closet with the understanding that someone would liberate her was never substantiated. Foul play was ruled out and her cause of death deemed a suicide.

It also came as a surprise in June of 1990 when Megan Leigh took her own life. After appearing in over 100 sexvids in about three years time, the perky, pretty Valley Girl put on some lingerie and put a gun to her head. Although kudos from the porn industry gave Leigh an emotional boost, apparently this wasn't enough to override the abuse she received from her mother. This, she described in a lengthy suicide note. Upon reading it, the police chief on the scene characterized it as "horrific."

In 1984, Shauna Grant, another beautiful blonde bit of cheesecake, killed herself after only two years in the erotic cinema. Although she made relatively few movies by today's standards, she is still very much remembered and fondly, at that. Porn stud Jerry Butler, who had almost nothing nice to say about anybody in his biography *Raw Talent*, was kind and gentle - but brutally honest - when it came to Grant. "Shauna was the fragile kind of girl you expected suicide from sooner or later. She was a victim: of sex, of the industry, of herself," he noted in print.

Two suicides in six years is almost acceptable. But why three in just one year's time? I have been queried on this subject by numerous interviewers, both in the straight and in the porn world. And every time, my answer is the same: I don't know.

The erotic universe creates a very safe space, especially for the insecure. It is a great ego booster. "You're a big fish in the space of a soda can," Mr. Butler has been known to say. All you have to do is fuck on film and people elevate you to a godlike status. You don't even have to like the sex; you just have to do it. Men stand in long lines at conventions to get your autograph and ogle. They pay big bucks to watch you dance. They shell out stupid amounts of cash to snap Polaroids with you. And all of this feels very good. It feels especially good to girls and boys who grew up with parents who told them they were stupid/ugly/worthless etc. There is money, pseudo-fame and glamour to prove mommy and daddy wrong. But there is also loneliness.

Many years ago, retired sex stud Richard Pacheco told me that every porn performer could write a heart-rending biography entitled, "Mommy and Daddy Didn't Love Me Enough." "Why else would we be here and do what we do?" Pacheco proposed. How else could they be able to buy and sell something we are all taught is precious and priceless. This isn't a criticism, just an observation from the trenches. A sad observation.

Just a few months ago, Hustler's Erotic Video Guide approached me to write an article about porn starlets being sexually abused as children. An upbeat, lighthearted, sexy, entertaining piece. I refused. For the first time in my erotic career, I turned down an assignment. I found the idea personally repulsive and knew it would upset me and the

actresses a great deal. I didn't have the heart of ask gory details about something which has probably scarred their lives. Needless to say, my editor at Hustler wasn't too pleased.

During my years in the industry as confidant and scribe, I've been privy to my share of horror stories. About sexual abuse at the hands of a father or uncle or brother or stepfather or next door neighbor. It is painfully common. The list of atrocities goes on and on. Terrible, yes, but probably no more or less terrible than what goes on in the musty basements of "straight" society. This is reason enough for anyone to commit suicide. But why so much and just recently?

The sex press is little help. Most of them have never so much as bared a butt cheek for the camera (and rightfully so, for many are nauseatingly plain looking) but are extremely critical about performers' physical attributes. This

might explain the recent plastic surgery phenomenon. Pert-breasted but spirited performer Bionca was criticized for having "dog tits" in print. This was before she elected to have her chest inflated. Another was said to "fuck like an ex-wife." Nina Hartley's adorable lisp has been likened to a lawn sprinkler. There is currently a scathing print war between Hustler EVG staffer Wally Ann Wharton and Ona Zee. The remarks are so physically brutal, childish and cruel that they simply do not bear repeating.

Originally, I was attracted to porn because of the diversity. The cornucopia of body types, the smorgasbord of sexual situations, the unbridled freedom. But things are different in the adult video business today. We seem to be creating a legion of disposable carnal Kewpie dolls, prettying them up on the outside, but ignoring the delicate material on the inside. And human beings just can't be treated like that. We crumble. We break. We bleed. We die. And sometimes at our own hands. - ARIEL HART

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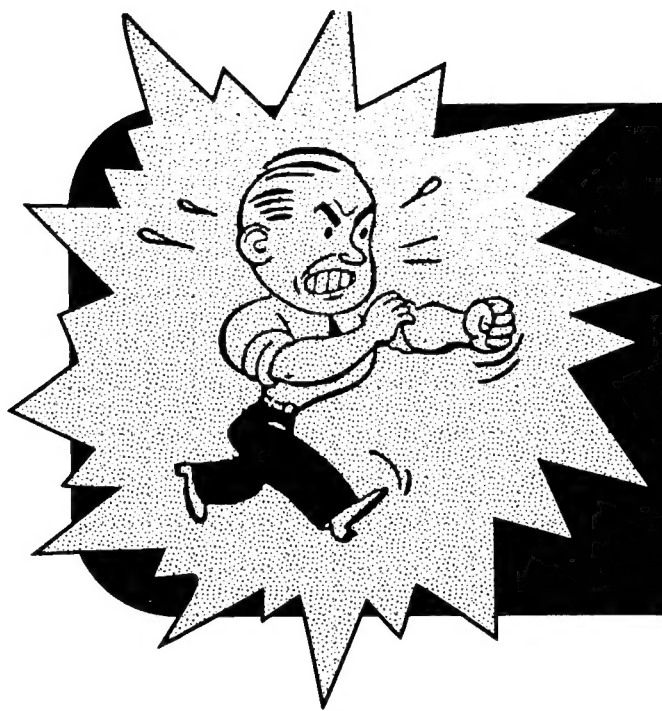
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On Manor's Mind

By: Stately Wayne Manor

It has come to my attention that, to some, O-M-M may seem out of synch with the rest of these pages. Maybe this column is too "cheery" in comparison to its dark companions? Don't get the picture, do you?

Sure, I use wit; but what makes you think I'm always laughing with you? Truth be told, I'm pissed. Although I have made the effort to rant on hundreds of topics, who hasn't done their share to correct these ills? YOU!!! Randomly choose a handful of previous O-M-M gripes. Now tell me how many of these items you personally made an endeavor to rectify. I'll answer for you: **none**

Have I got a single note saying "Thanks to Stately I no longer pronounce 'Harry' as 'Hairy'"? No. How about a letter reading "O Insightful Wizard, I've made a vow to clamp the figure-four leglock on anyone trying to pass for an ethnic group other than his or her own or using 'some' before a numeral"? No. Has anybody telegraphed "I'd love to give Mr. Manor a passionate kiss and

caress for all he's done to clarify society's shortcomings." Okay, one guy has, but that's not the point.

When I complain about something that needs to be changed, it's not a suggestion, it's an order, damn it. You people better get on the ball. Don't forget, I've got access to the Brut address list and can have a Manor moved into your neighborhood within two weeks.

Why does Comedy Central, the one network whose sole raison d'être is humor, have the most godawful "comedy" film library in the Milky Way? Are Zapped and Cracking Up **anyone's** idea of rib-ticklers? Consider this: Central's movies are so abysmal, they make Bronson Pinchot seem funny! Is that even possible?

Let's flip to another specialty channel. Oh no, it's E! En(ema)ertainment Network. As much as I enjoy gossip - particularly if it's slanderous allegations I've made up - this

channel's overtones are a real downer. In one corner you've got Talk Soup host John Henson, replacement for Greg Kinnear who appeared throughout to be auditioning for a gab show of his own - and got one. Like his predecessor, Henson is out of the smug wiseass school championed by fading grump David Bedwetterman and, as such, raises instant ire at the Stately Estate.

Clawing out of the other corner is Steve Kmetko and partner Kathleen Sullivan. Masculine and feminine deliveries . . . but not necessarily respectively. While smarmy Steve and curt Kath stop short of snapping their fingers and addressing stars as "Miss Thing," the show has enough Christopher Street cattiness that repeated viewing may cause one to cough up a furball. In addition to the suspicious eyeglasses (discussed in a previous column), Kmetko has a reedy voice. Unfortunately, it's Rex Reedy.

Let's switch media and see what's what with music. For those striving to be hack rock stars, memorize Concert Clichés 422 and 423: Introduce a band member as "Mister So-and-so" and, by all means, tell everyone a song "goes something like this."

The record biz never ceases to inspire questions. How come, once an R&B act has a hit ballad, they never play a funky uptempo tune again? What are all the musicians who got heavily tattooed to appear tough -yeah, like that's working - going to do when the pretty boy look makes it inevitable return?

Just think how different so many would look if a couple Stray Cats - who basically pioneered heavy inking in alternative circles - bypassed the paint parlor and instead got Ubangi lip plates.

Hate to sound like the Crown Prince Of Squaresville in regard to multiple tats as I really do understand the "it's my body and I'll dye if I want to" principle. Nonetheless, qualms remain.

First, unless one gets an original design, how distinctive can a recipient be with a pattern chosen from a studio wall display - a marking that will be identically applied for decades? Imagine the nightmare if a person you found utterly repulsive - say, for example, Pauly Shore - got megapublicity in which the jerk was emblazoned with the exact same tattoo as you because he/she too went to Sailor Frank's . . . and everywhere you went, people thought you were a huge fan of the vile creature!

In the case of the above, you can

always get a tat covered by another. But that doesn't eradicate my second reservation: with the exception of those astounding Yakuza works, from what I've seen of older tattoos, with age, three-quarters of 'em look like water colors that were left out in the rain longer than that stupid cake in "MacArthur's Park"! I hope, for the sake of my painted pals and palaces, modern methods prevent them from looking tie-dyed in the year 2010.

Yeah, yeah, I've heard it all before. "I live only for today. Tomorrow is unlikely to come, so why sweat it? Blah, blah, blah." What exactly does the "No Future" mindset mean now that it's **t-w-e-n-t-y y-e-a-r-s** after the Pistols started singing about it?

EXTRAORDINARY INSIGHT:

Yes, the phrase "Try saying that three times fast!" is code for "Please slowly garrote me with a wire hanger." *Adult Video News* chief Paul Fishbein published a gripe about them last year, and I can't agree more: people who use an apostrophe to pluralize are a bunch of "moron's" . . . If men took their wives' names in marriage rather than vice versa, David Bowie would be Mr. Iman! (You know, as in Mystery Man.) Ever notice the visual pun on the cover of the album following *Station To Station?* (*Low* + profile) . . . "Look how uncool that sci-fi fan is, getting into a costume to hang with his friends," scoffed the goth guy in the chain mail shirt and leather codpiece . . . Note to Pringles ad copywriter: Most who eat potato chips do NOT wipe greasy hands across their shirts. The annoying ad character **does** bring up one puzzler: If the Frito bandito displayed an oil stain near his collar, would that mean he had a chip on his shoulder?

Whattaya mean "What if God was one of us?", Joan Osborne? Don't you read my *Wrestling World* column?

HUBBA HUBBA HONEY: I bet I'm not alone in the "What's the big deal about Marilyn Monroe" boat. Granted, she was pretty, stacked and talented - but that was true of hundreds of other starlets, most of whom were not surgically altered. And what was with the constantly half-shut eyes in photo poses? When it comes to the era's megahyped bombshells I'll take Jayne Mansfield over MM any time.

Of course, neither of those buxom blondes qualify for Honeydom as this segment is devoted to lasses who, despite having the qualifications, have not become icons. Which brings us to this issue's honoree, Natalie Wood.

My grandfather took me to see a re-release of *West Side Story* when I was a little nipper and even then I knew there was something special about "Maria." Maturing(?) I eventually deduced the key to her appeal: Natalie possessed the classic fantasy mystique - the conservative-appearing girl who privately scorched.

As it turns out, the latter was not just a figment of Manor's misguided mind. Recent revelations suggest Ms. Wood really **WAS** a wild child! For instance, Nat volunteered to be bathed in champagne by Dennis Hopper and Nick Adams, then wound up in the ER because the bubbly irritated a rather sensitive area of her anatomy.

Sadly, for those of us who never got a chance to share a tub of vino with her, Natalie did a Brian Jones shortly after shooting *Brainstorm*. She is missed. In fact, I think of her whenever I stare into the mirror and sing "I Feel Pretty."





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Leon and Arzilla King were having a frank and open discussion. It was Professor Pecho's homework assignment for Arzilla's course in Elementary Outrage.

She consulted her Xeroxed sheet. "Have you ever committed adultery?"

Leon was knotting his tie to go to work. He's head of the local Public Service Division at Duke Power. He's the man people swear at when their electricity is out off. They scream into the telephone. They slash his tires - tax-deductible, if they do it in the company lot. They throw things in his office. His sheetrock looks like an aerial photograph of Verdun in 1917 - holes from handbags, orators from soft-drink cans, indentions from shoes, bruises from the butts of umbrellas. One guy brought in his daughter's Little League bat and threw it through the window.

Leon glanced at Arzilla's reflection in the bathroom mirror. "Of course not," he said. "I've been completely faithful."

"Lies-oon-vino-ing-ly," she wrote, mouthing the syllables as her hand moved slowly across the

page. Then she spoke once again in what had become, during the past seven weeks, her normal voice. "Do you imagine having sex with other women?"

"Once in a while," he admitted.

"Em-plays-hon-es-ty-as-a-wea-pon."

Now they were sipping coffee in the breakfast nook. Arzilla handed him yesterday's USA Today. He tried to find the sports page.

"It's not there," she said. "Turn to B-3."

B-3 was a feature article about a blind 76-year-old woman who had been robbed in her own home. The burglar had taken five hundred dollars out of her bra.

"We talked about it in class," Arzilla said. "Professor Pecho told us she's a metaphor."

"Leon finished the article. 'Sounds to me like she's just had some bad luck.'"

Arzilla oluoked her tongue and returned to her handout sheet. "Un-sup-por-tive. Do you endorse the Equal Rights Amendment?"

"Yes," he said.

"Pas-sive-ag-gres-sive."

Leon tried to pretend he was already at work. He straightened his necktie and stretched his lips. "What seems to be the problem?"

"Nothing," Arzilia said, exposing her teeth. "Professor Pecho told me to work on my anger."

"You're doing a good job," he said.

Arzilia's nostrils dilated. "How would you know? You can just tell your boss to fuck off. I don't have a boss. I just have you."

"I think you have a mistaken impression," he said, "of the employer-employee relationship."

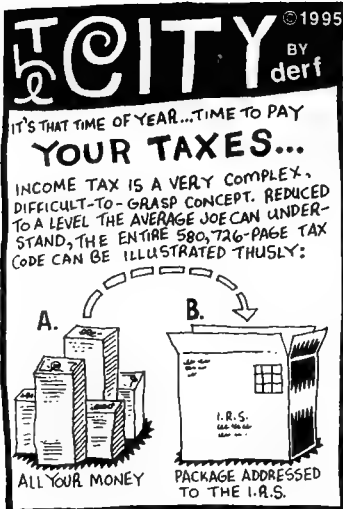
"Self-rat-ion-al-i-za-tion," she wrote. Her watery blue eyes widened. "You don't know what it's like to swallow your rage."

He checked his wristwatch and finished his lukewarm coffee. "Yes dear," he said.

Three weeks later, Leon registered by mail for a Continuing Education course entitled "Feminism With A Human Face." It was expressly designed "To introduce men to gender." He was planning to frame his Certificate of Completion and give it to Arzilia as a surprise birthday present in May. In the meantime, he'd tell her that he'd joined a Wednesday night bowling league.

The first Wednesday he got caught behind a funeral cortege on Route 29 and was five minutes late for class. Still, he as the only student anywhere near room 114. He stood in the doorway and gazed at the lectern next to the steel desk in front of the blackboard. "I guess the course is cancelled," he said aloud.

"Not necessarily." A woman orowled out from behind the desk's modest panel. "Excuse me. I dropped one of my contact lenses." Still on her knees, she looked her index finger, then popped the lens back into her left eye. She blinked rapidly in his direction, then stood up behind the lectern. "There. That's better."



Leon walked through the aisles of small desks, not quite certain what he was getting into. "I didn't know you could have a class with only one student."

"You can," she smiled, "when it's grant-driven."

Leon sat down in the second row. "Where do we start?"

"With names," she said. "What's yours?"

He told her.

"Very appropriate," she said. "I was born Belinda Martinez. That was the name imposed upon me without my consent." She fingered the tassels on the front of her power suit. "Think of the subtext. Belinda Martinez. BM. My parents subliminally found me inferior to my older brother. Number two."

"Maybe it was an accident," he said.

"I had to put myself through college. They paid for him to go to medical school. There are not accidents," she said. "Do you ever read Raek magazine?"

Leon wondered if it was a trick question. "Well, I've looked at the pictures."

"I was a Raek scholar. After they made me Disciplinarian of the Month, I decided to change my name. I wanted to exploit myself," she explained.

Leon admired her profile

as she turned to pick up a piece of chalk. "You have a lot to exploit."

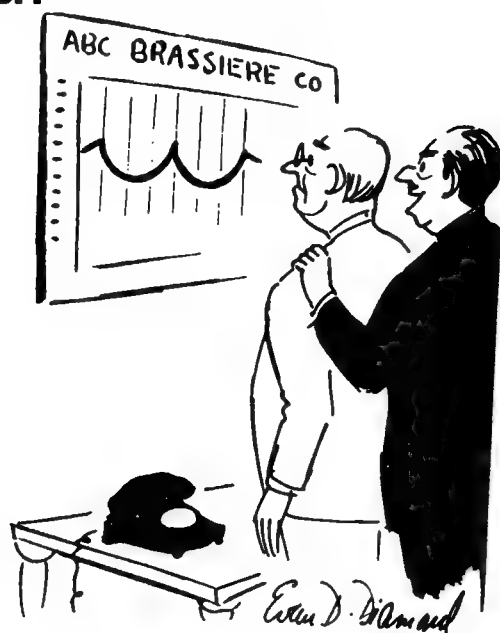
"That's when I gave birth to myself. That's when I became . . . DEE DEE PEOHO."

Leon stared at the block letters on the blackboard. The Continuing Education brochure had identified the instructor merely as Staff. "I'm Arzilla's husband," he said.

"I know," Professor Peoho said. "She's described you in some detail."

Leon couldn't help wondering which of his details Arzilla had described. "She doesn't know about this. But I'm really here for her sake. Is there anything I can do to improve our marriage?"

"Arzilla's going through a very difficult stage right now." Dee Dee sighed formidably. "I'm trying to bring out the lesbian in her."



That's right Jenkins. You look at the chart while I play with your hot ass!

"You're doing a good job," Leon said.

"Eventually, she'll move beyond anger."

"I'd settle for before anger," Leon said.

"Wham. Bam. Thank you, ma'am. Instant gratification. That's what they all want." Professor Pecho shook her head slowly from east to west. "Marriage is inherently unstable. A democracy of two. Think about it."

Leon thought for a moment. "That's bullshit," he said.

"If you insist." Professor Pecho smiled over her lectern.

"But I prefer to conceive it as gender-neutral."

Leon was glad that he'd decided to stick with Professor Pecho. After two or three sessions, her ideas started to make so much sense that he began to wonder if there was a lesbian inside him, too. He came to appreciate her gifts as a teacher.

Tonight they were discussing Arzilla's lack of progress in "Elementary Outrage."

"It's not anyone's fault," Professor Pecho said. "It's just your respective subject positions in a socially predetermined context." "I'm not quite sure what you mean," Leon said.

"Basically, it's hard for her to get mad at somebody who's not a son of a bitch."

"I never thought of it that way before."

"Arzilla has a real problem," Professor Pecho said. "She just can't think non-hierarchically. I might have to fail her."

"What can I do?"

"Help her development. Give her something to focus on." She patted his wrist and smiled. "May I ask you a personal question?"

Leon felt small beads of perspiration forming on his forehead. "Of course."

She rested her hand on the inside of his thigh. Leon sat motionless while he watched his trousers readjust themselves of their own accord.

"How did a man like you ever get mixed up with someone like her?"

The last meeting of Leon's tutorial coincided with Arzilla's final exam. Dee Dee was instructing him on the convertible couch in her office. "I think we've moved beyond rage," she said.

"Three times," he said.

"Speak for yourself."

"Two times," he said.

In addition to his Certificate of Completion, Dee Dee gave him an engraved "Loving Cup" as a graduation present.

"Try it on," she insisted. "It's stainless steel."

Leon followed the former
Disciplinarians
instructions.
He couldn't help
himself.
He was
In love.

"A perfect
fit," she
said. "In
your
dormant
state."

He
retrieved
his boxer
shorts
from
beneath
her
oomputer
work
station.

"Wait a
minute,"
she said.
"I haven't
been
totally
honest
with you,
Leon."

He felt his
stomach
shriveled.
"About
what?"

"Arzilla's
exam,"
she said.
"I'm afraid
it's a take-
home."

It wasn't
easy, but
he
managed to slide his
trousers up and over the
Loving Cup. "Thanks for
the warning," he said,
blowing her a kiss.

"Remember," she
whispered, pulling the

blanket up to her chin as
he approached the office
door. "Answer frankly
and openly. Give her a
chance to focus.



One year later,
Leon King is
happily
divorced. On
Dee Dee's
advice, he put
all of his assets
in Arzilla's
name, filed for
bankruptoy, and
then sued for
divoroe on the
grounds of
adultery - his
own.

Arzilla's anger is
flourishing,
along with her
grade-point
average. "I got
nothing," she
says to her new
aoademic
advisor. "I had
to put up a wall
around my
heart. He's
bankrupt."

"Good thing you
owned the
house," he says.

"And the oar,"
Arzilla says.
"Don't forget the
oar."

Leon lives in
Dee Dee's
oondominium.
In lieu of rent,
he's quit his job

at Duke Power to
become her Rage
Faillitator, part-time. If
she gets that major grant
for an affirmative-aotion
program, then he'll
become an Assistant
Professor of Lesbian

Studies.

For now, his job is to help women focus. Dee Dee brings in a new group of non-traditional students every week for orientation. He waits in her office, lies on her couch, and watches Monday Night Football until half time. When she comes for him, he turns off the TV and walks with her back to the classroom.

The basket of rotten fruit beside every desk, he now knows, is part of the materials fee.

"I love tomatoes," he leers, as he walks slowly down one aisle, then up the next. They hiss and keep throwing. His dry-cleaning bills are tax-deductible on Dee Dee's Schedule A, Line 19.

Then he stands on a small raised platform while Dee Dee tells his life story.

"This is Leon King. A man's man." She points to his electric blue tie, the one he always wears on Monday nights. Dee Dee has told him that it makes him look more phallic. "When he got married, his wife quit her job. Of course, it was her decision." "Of course," the class echoes.

"Then he had an affair. Of course, it was because his wife couldn't meet his needs."

Carla, who's majoring in Tae Kwon Do, weaves a minor in Medusa, yells out "The snake!"

He smiles and assumes his Colossus position, arms akimbo. The women start to aim more carefully.

"Then," Dee Dee continues, "he wanted a divorce. He got a divorce. She got nothing because he was already bankrupt."

"Morally or financially?" Jessica sneers.

Dee Dee tugs at the sleeves of his Armani suit - the one she bought for his fortieth birthday. "But look at him now." She walks to the blackboard, which he can't see, but he can hear the chalk screeching against the slate as she writes the word FOCUS in giant letters. He braces himself.

Then she kicks him in the Loving Cup from behind.

Leon collapses and writes on the classroom floor. He's gotten good at it - Dee Dee tells him he's got a real gift for writhing. Sometimes he moans. Sometimes he remains silent, miming his agony.

Patriarchy is dead.

The tomatoes keep coming.

Then they go home, where Dee Dee inspects his Loving Cup for collateral damage. The next morning - indeed, on every morning - she gets up early to serve him breakfast in bed. Along with anything else he desires. He has become

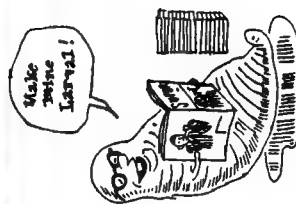
particularly fond of the Belgian Waffle.

He prefers to have Dee Dee in the kneeling position. 'It reminds me of how we first met,' he says. 'I guess I'm just a sentimentalist.'

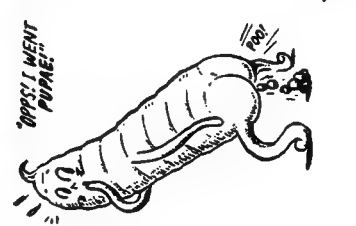
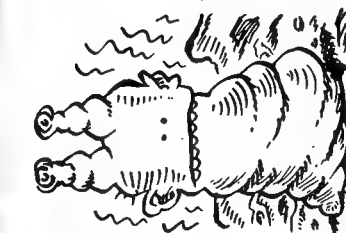
'You're lucky,' she says, licking her Redi-Whip, 'that I'm beyond anger.'

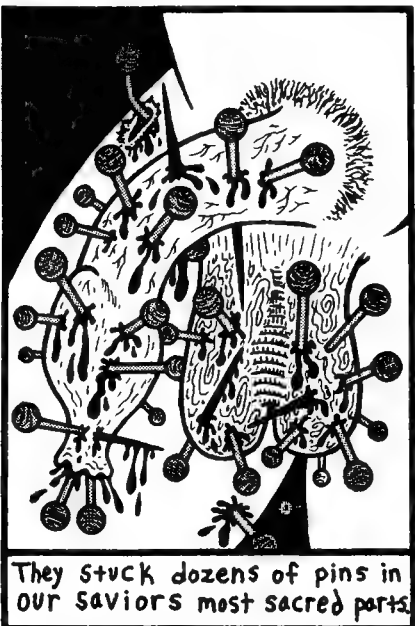
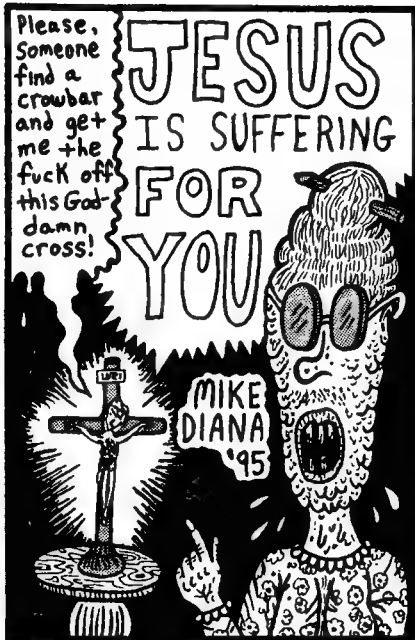
And they embrace.

Finally Leon's life is in order. His wife is The Other Woman. She's the boss. His word is law. She kicks him where it hurts every week. He's never felt better. Her condominium is his castle. He never has to mow the grass. He writhes in public. He writhes in private. He's still single. He has the perfect marriage.



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Poetry

Adonis

you are a shadow of your former self again

a pathetic excuse for living flesh with your hairy thighs parked
unmoving in your crooked and rotted sofa, a cheap beer in one hand
and the remote control in the other, your virgin goddess mother's
breast milk soaking through the top layer of your ruined skull
like rainwater through topsoil.

bread crumbs dry on your chest
the saliva in your mouth turns to blood
you are beautiful
you are Adonis

the zits on your butt break open and pus fills your shorts like
sap from a flesh-wound but you don't notice because the pain is
your friend; the sting is your holy savior.

your life has become nothing
your purpose has long since been fulfilled
and you hardly notice when the bullet I put through your temple
shatters your brain like glass and the pieces of your mind hit the
wall behind you like the shards of a broken mirror.

your face is a window
through it I see Elysium. (Scott Milder)

Breaking Away

The summer I was thirteen I plotted ways to
massacre my family,
Then run away and live on the streets of a vast
American city,
Possibly Chicago.
Devoid of funds and equally short of courage,
I settled for sleeping on a cot in our front yard,
My bathing suit as nightgown.
With this show of independence I fancied I had broken
One small link in the hated chain that bound me to my
clan.
Out there on the farm mid alfalfa fields and
crickets
I'd lie on my little iron cot and stare at the
Southern Oregon sky
Full of yellow stars.
I'd breathe the scent of my mother's garden,
Mock orange and roses and pinks that made me think
of apple pie.
No one would come to say good night, and my mouth would
taste of sadness,
As the lights inside the house went out one by one.
Then Webster, the cat, would slink across the weedy lawn,
Curl up close beside me and sing me to sleep with
his lullaby. (Hermie Medley)

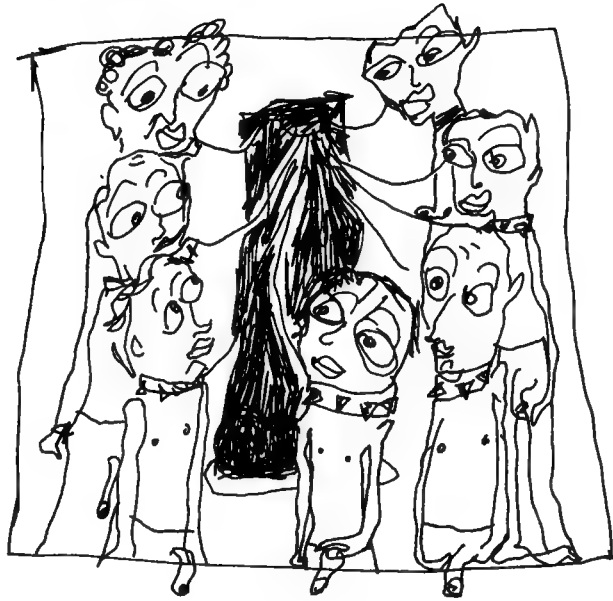


Group Behavior

At thirteen
they gathered together in the clubhouse
to share a copy of *Hustler*
that one of them had taken from his father's
private stash. They all pointed and hooted
at the naked ladies with those private parts
the likes of which they'd never seen.

At sixteen
they met out in the woods
smoked pot and talked about their first times,
slowly describing in detail the feel, using long
drawn-out metaphors until they lost track of
the train of their thought and stared vacantly
into space.

At twenty-one
they raped Linda in the closet of a bedroom
at a loud party with blaring music
that made it impossible to hear her screaming
or the sobbing afterwards. (Laurie Calhoun)



How Do You Like Your Steak? Or, The Mad Girl Wraps Her Porn In The Steak Book While Riding On The Subway

Behind the cover of meat dripping, wrapped
around erotica like things and lips
climbing your vine. "How do you like
yours? Dripping and rare?" on the

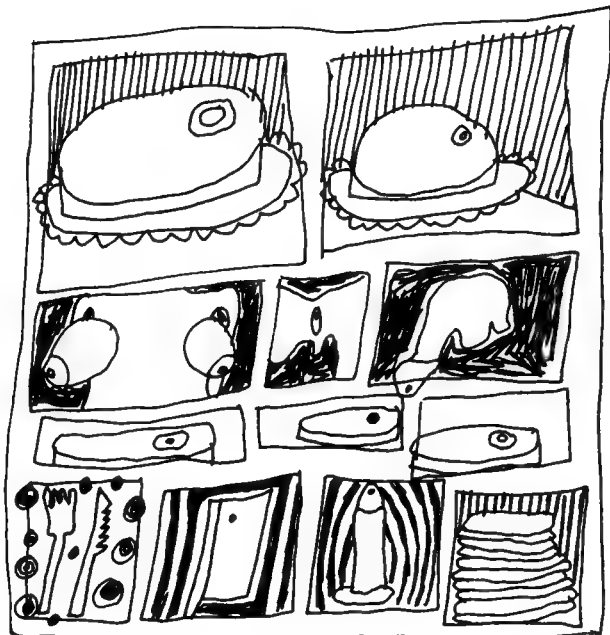
metro, strangers press nipples and asses
into hair and leather. The mad girl looks
into the split open pages where
women fuck men half horse, half

man with a long tail dripping.
They beg with breasts and yes
want a huge bulging cock.
"How do you like it, with pepper?" The

steak books suggests aged steaks are better.
You don't have to be 17 with breasts way up
there, can broil, fry, braise. You can
cook frozen steak. Meat is good for you, it's

nutritious, a rich source, makes
you drool just thinking of it,
leaves you, as cocks shrivel and droop,
satisfied. It's what a mother serves her

son just back from college, especially
if no one's looking, what business men crave
after a successful deal, what one
serves a very special guest. It
really takes a little doing to ruin a good piece of meat. (Lyn Lifshin)



art courtesy of
CAMILLA CAMILLA

The House that Ate PEOPLE

by Frank Stauf

My best friend Steve, tall and skinny as a scarecrow, wore glasses thick as coke bottles and rarely bathed. At twenty-two, the only job he ever held was in a comic book store in San Francisco's Sunset District. The work consisted mainly of listening to Iggy Pop's *Funhouse* album at full blast, scaring the hell out of the prepubescent Chinese boys who came in every day after school for their superhero-robot-comix fix.

"Uh, excuse me, *sir*? When I bought this copy of *X-Men* Number Eight here yesterday, you said it was in *mint condition*, but when I got it home I noticed that the left-hand bottom corner of the back cover has a *crease* in it, see? and I was wondering if

HUH? WHAA? SPEAK UP, KID, I CAN'T HEAR YOU!" Other duties included waiting for 7:00 o'clock, at which time Steve went home to draw his own cartoons.

He'd wanted to be a writer once, until he discovered he could draw.

After closing up the shop, he'd walk to the bus stop, greasy hair mopping his glasses as he looked down at his enormous shoes and thought about what he would sketch that night. He rode the bus into the Mission District alone - no one sat next to him - and he missed his stop as he always did thanks to daydreaming. He was anxious to get home even though he hated living in the "hole," an old vaguely Italianate structure with a Victorian flat-top. **A grizzled survivor of the 1906 quake, the decrepit building leaned slightly to the south, its bay windows covered in grime, its walls dissolutely festooned with peeling coats of grayish white paint. In the barren front yard: rusty beer cans and piles of dog shit.**

Coming up the cracked cement walkway, Steve saw the light on in the bathroom and knew his roommate Roger was in there. Roger was always in there.

The moment Steve opened the front door, Roger's dog C.K. came skittering down the hall, lurching into an easel propped against the wall, knocking it over along with several heaped-up bags of garbage. Empty Budweiser tall boys ricocheted everywhere.

C.K. wagged his hairless pink stump of a tail and whimpered for Steve to pat him on his huge square head. Roger hollered a "hallo" from behind the bathroom door. Steve's reply, as always, "How long

are you going to be in there?"

"It's going to be a while," said Roger, cracking another beer. He took whole six packs to the bathroom and drank them in there, piss warm.

"God damn it, Roger, I have to take a **DUMP!**

I've been WORKING all day, and I'd like to at least be able to take a DUMP when I come home!"

"I'm sorry, Steve, but you know that beer is a powerful diuretic."

Steve stomped to the kitchen, spread a newspaper on the floor, dropped his pants and squatted. The dog come in, sniffing and nuzzling; Steve stuck a paper bag over its head. "That's what you get for having such a cold nose."

When he was finished he would wrap it all up in the newspaper and drop it in the wastepaper basket in Roger's room. Then he would pick up the phone and dial my number. He called me every day after going through this ritual. On this particular day it went like this:

"Hi, Frank, it's me."

"It's Steve," I told my girlfriend. She rolled her eyes and went back to her Psych textbook.

"Guess what I'm doing right now," Steve said.

"Oh Jesus, not again!"

"Yup. He's been in there every day this week. Beer is a powerful diuretic, you know."

"I know, I know. I've *been* to your place, remember?"

"Just barely. Hold on a sec, I've gotta wipe." I could hear him yelling at the dog, could hear its nails click-clacking on the warped wooden floor. "So when are you guys coming to visit?"

"I don't know, Steve. When are you moving out of there?"

He laughed. "You know I can't do that; **the house** won't let me! **It's like a jealous lover.** Hell, **I'm lucky it even lets me go to work in the morning** - I mean, look how **it's kept Roger all these years.**"

Anne was peering at me over her textbook. "We all have our own houses to feed, I mumbled. "How about I meet you at work tomorrow? Anne's got night class."

When I hung up, Anne was giving me that you're-going-to-come-home-drunk-again-aren't-you look. "We've been friends since we were kids," I told her. "He doesn't know anyone else in San Francisco,

except for Roger . . ."

Next day I met Steve at the comic book shop. His hair was much longer than I remembered; the sweatshirt and the JC Penny jeans his mother bought him many Christmases ago were spattered with ink and gesso. We locked up shop exactly at seven, rode the bus together to a liquor store near Steve's house, and bought four sixteen ounces for the night.

I hadn't visited the house in months, and halfway up the stairs to the porch I was reminded why: the smell. **IT WAS THE SORT OF MIASMIC STENCH ONE**

ASSOCIATES WITH OPENED GRAVES in a horror story, though actually it was a mingling of unrefrigerated, rotting food, stale cigarette smoke, dead rats in the walls, hundreds of spilled beers, urine, feces, mold, mildew, fetid socks, the musty effluvium of the decaying house itself, the musk of Roger's unbathed dog, the musk of unbathed Roger, and of course, the musk of unbathed Steve. When my friend unlocked the door, C.K. was already there to greet us, slavering and wagging his obscene pink stump. I was shocked to see how starkly his ribs protruded, how desperately and pathetically he sniffed the bags we were carrying.

Roger, naturally, was in the bathroom. I gave the door a tap, "Hey Roger! It's Frank!"

"Frank! Good to see you!"

"Uh, same here." I walked into the kitchen and saw Steve spreading newspapers. "I'll wait in your room," I said.

Steve's room was a jumble of comic books, beer cans, dirty laundry. A big drawing table stood slightly angled against one wall, littered with various-sized pieces of stiff, gessoed cardboard, some blank, others covered with dark pen-strokes. The middle of the room was occupied by a large easy chair with stuffing sprouting out of it like fungus, facing the room's only window. Beside the chair a large stereo speaker served as a table, with an ashtray and a bong on top (the other speaker was broken, rendering Steve's collection of vintage stereo l.p.'s almost useless) and from the way it was all set up, I could see Steve spending a lot of time in that chair, as I would have, getting stoned and looking out the window at a garden of twisted, misshapen, weirdly undulating weeds. The glass was warped, giving Steve's view of his neighbor's yard the expressionistic twist that was beginning to show up in his art. Roger had a window too, but it was boarded up, the glass broken one night when Roger lurched against it, back in the glory days when beer still got him drunk.

I wondered what was taking Steve so long in the kitchen. Bored, I started sifting through the clutter on his table; found a nearly-finished drawing prominently titled "THE HOUSE THAT EATS PEOPLE." It depicted Roger as a hideously tattered skeleton enthroned upon the toilet, beer in one hand, a roll-your-own in the other, demonic eyes malignantly blazing in their bony sockets at the intruder who had dared to violate his privacy. I was still trading stares with this

abomination when Steve came in.

"What do you think?"

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"Not bad," I mumbled. Actually, it was one of the best things he'd ever done; despite its abstract touches, it possessed a quality of **uncanny** realism most of his previous work lacked. "Not bad, not bad at all."

"Well, thanks," he said. "It's part of a series I'm doing about the house. The next one's going to be of C.K.'s skeleton in front of the refrigerator."

"Shit, if that dog gets any skinnier he can pose for you. Isn't Roger feeding him?"

"I don't know. I don't talk to Roger much these days. I think he gave it some **bones** the other day, though."

"You guys have a falling out?"

"I guess you could call it that."

Returning from the kitchen with more beers, Steve plopped down into his chair, handed me a beer, took a swig of his own and began filling the bong. "I've got you to blame for *this* vice, Frank. The beer I can blame on Roger."

"I can blame them both on Anne," I said, "even though she's clean and sober now."

Steve smiled and lit the bowl, tiny twin flames reflected in his glasses. We each took a good hit.

"So," I croaked, holding the smoke in, "when are *you* going to get a girlfriend? I mean, twenty-one is kind of old to still be a **virgin**."

"Come on, Frank. If you were a girl, would you be interested in me?"

"Sure, why not? You're smart, you're an excellent artist . . ."

"And I have a wonderful personality, I know. But I'd have to brush my teeth, comb my hair, bathe regularly . . ." He put his big feet up on a plastic milk crate. "Really, Frank, the sad truth is I'd rather just stay in the house and smoke more pot."

So we smoked more pot and drank more beer until the room became a sort of grainy home movie bouncing in and out of focus, and the only thing missing was Roger. Jolly Roger Brand had been a minor celebrity in the early seventies, publishing two issues of his own comic book, the **"Floating Head"** series, and I'd always enjoyed listening to him bullshit about the old underground comix scene.

"So, tell me about this falling out you had with Roger," I said.

"Already did."

"No, you didn't. Some crap about the house."

"That's it. It's sucking his soul out through his asshole. Beer is . . ."

"A powerful diuretic, I know. But he was a pretty good artist in the old days."

"Sure, he *was*. But now he's . . . **dead.**" Steve let his head fall forward on his chest for

emphasis, causing his glasses to slide to the tip of his Gallic nose. I excused myself to take a leak, only to find Roger was still in the bathroom. He was as apologetic and unmoving as ever.

"What should I do?" I asked Steve.

"Piss out the kitchen window. That's what I usually do."

"Following Steve's advice I accidentally hosed down a cat that was hiding under a bush outside. It's screeching brought C.K. bounding into the room and almost out the window, which I slammed shut just in time. C.K. stood up on his skinny hind legs and scratched at the glass with one forepaw, whimpering pathetically.

"Poor old brute." I patted his bony skull. He gave me such a mournful look I opened the refrigerator, took out a grayish-green lump of rancid hamburger. Nearly gagging from the stench I nevertheless found myself asking the dog if he really wanted it. Wagging his stump and shifting anxiously from leg to leg, C.K. drooled from open jaws. I took that for a yes and put the rotting meat down and watched in disgust as the suppurating meat was devoured in a few hearty gulps.

"Poor dog," I said, while walking back to Steve's room with beers.

"Don't tell *me*, tell Roger."

HEY ROGER! I yelled down the hall, "WHY DON'T YOU FEED YOUR FUCKING DOG?!"

No answer - just the *pop* of another beer being opened.

After Steve and I had popped a few more beers ourselves, I began to realize how much I'd missed this kind of life . . . hanging around in beat-up flats, getting loaded, no one waiting up at home, just me and a friend bullshitting into the small hours . . . words bouncing around our hopes, our art, our egos . . . Truth was, despite re-reading Poe and H.P. Lovecraft many times for inspiration, I hadn't written a good horror story or poem in months, and I was getting worried.

Anne's cramping my style," I said. "Mind if I move in?"

"Why not? You can have Roger's room. He doesn't use it."

"Ah, that reminds me . . ." Getting up, I felt my way down the darkened hall toward the sliver of light that showed under the bathroom door. "Are you STILL in there, Roger?"

"Sorry, Frank. You know how it is."

"I'm beginning to." This time I pissed in the kitchen sink, which was full of furry blue dishes. Then I called Anne to tell her I'd be spending the night.

Sounds like quite an evening," she said.

"Oh, yeah."

Steve was grinning at me when I came back with the beers. I knew what he was thinking: nothing had changed for me since we were in school together; I still had to call home for permission to sleep over.

"Sure you can live without it for one night, Frank?"

That was the flipside: Steve had freedom to do whatever he wanted - i.e., almost nothing - but I had the luxury of taking sex for granted.

"Maybe we should trade places for a week or two," I said. "Give me a chance to catch up on my writing, and you . . ."

Steve put his finger up against his nose as if considering. Finally he shook his head. "I don't think the house would allow it."

"Which one? Yours or mine?"

"Both. But mine especially. It's developed a taste for me, I think, and me for it. When it's finished with Roger . . . I'm next.

"What the hell are you talking about?"

"Well, when the house finally sucks the rest of Roger down that throat it calls a toilet, maybe then there'll be another vacancy. But I don't know. This place isn't for every body. And besides, it may never swallow that bloated liver of his, though that's the delicacy it craves most."

"Whatever you say, Steve."

"You see, the demon of this house has very special, very peculiar tastes. It likes artists."

"That *is* peculiar."

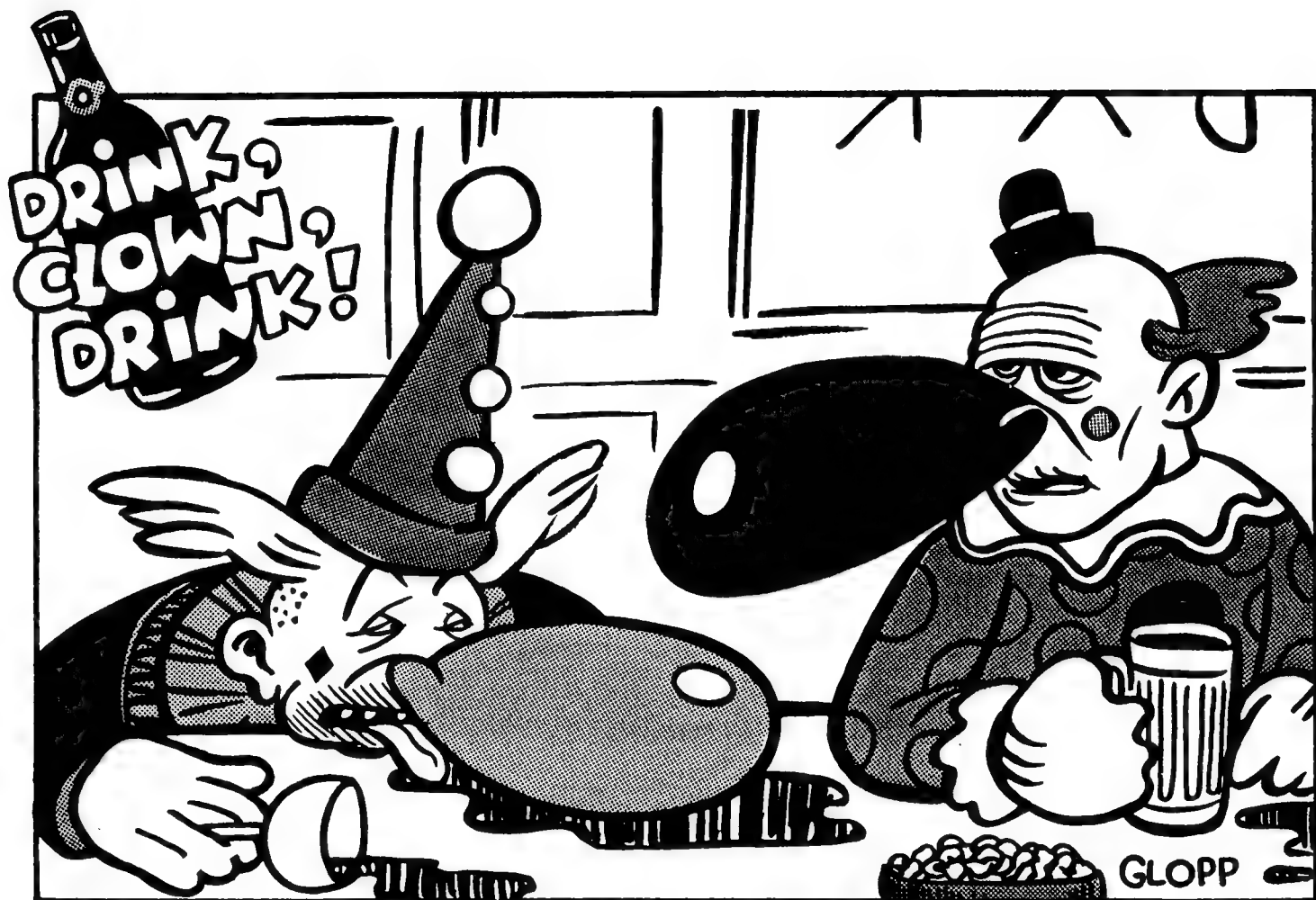
"And it prefers alcoholic artists - artists who, you know, just don't give a shit anymore."

"Sort of an Art Hell," I added.

"Exactly. And each of us who are damned to that Hell, before we can be released through an alcoholic or possibly "drug related" death, must execute a portrait of the **demon spirit** of that house, wherever and however we may find it."

"Well, Roger certainly did his share of hellish underground drawings, all that speed-inspired frenzy."

"Yes, and he's been living in this place for *decades*. His wife even lived here for a while, before he gave up speed for drinking. Got too poor and boring so she divorced him."



"Chaplin was a commie fag. Keaton was a drunk. Harold Lloyd was impotent. Arbuckle was a celebrated rapist. Harry Langdon wore diapers. Laurel was a drunk. Hardy was a hermaphrodite. Groucho was a pompous ass. And so was Billy Bevan. Chico fucked boyscouts. Harpo was a commie fag. Fields was a drunk. Abbott was a compulsive gambler. Costello was in with the mob. Ben Turpin molested poultry. Lloyd Hamilton had adolescent oriental girls defecate in his famous comedy hat. William Bendix had three nostrils. The Ritz brothers were satan worshippers. Charlie Chase ate baby sparrows. Al St. John was a drunk. Mack Sennett was an uncultured illiterate slob. And so was Billy West. Moe fondled neighborhood children. Curley fondled neighborhood dogs. Larry was a stigmatic. Shemp wet his bed. Joe Besser's wife was ill. Snub Pollard was into whips, chains, nipple clamps and Chester Conklin. Leon Errol was a drunk. Bobby Clark beat his wife. McCullough slit his throat in a barber's chair. Jack Benny was a woman from Philadelphia named Estelle M. Wilkenson. Every Saturday night Jimmy Durante masterbated into clean white socks and cast them from his hotel suite onto the crowded streets below. Ned Sparks was a drunk. Billy Gilbert collected used toilet paper. Edgar Kennedy was a known pyromaniac. Mantan Moreland had the clap. Franklin Pangborn was a commie fag. Benny Rubin was a drunk. Raymond Griffith communicated telepathically with an astral entity named Macloudbah. Chick Sales ate his lunch from a colostomy bag. Eddie Cantor exposed his dink for a split second in every one of his pictures. Gil Lamb picked up white socks from off of crowded city streets. Olson sold drugs. Johnson sold babies. Joe Penner had an unborn twin named Goo-Goo growing from his abdomen. Mack Swain was a drunk. Ernie Kovacs shot smack. Andy Devine shot steroids. Dave O'Brian shot Kennedy. Burt Lahr was a pompous ass. Danny Kaye was a commie fag. Ed Wynn was a drunk. Byron Foulger lived sixteen years with a male orangutang named Letitia who swept his rooms, did all his laundry, doubled for him at bridge and taught him the ways of the African jungle. So they all had their problems. . . funny guys though."

© Mark Newgarden, 1990

"If you can't stand the heat . . . "

"Get out of Art **Sell.**"

"And what's *your* portrait going to be - that thing on the table?" I pointed to the half-finished drawing of Roger as skeleton.

"That's just a beginning - part of a triptych. Skeletons of Roger and C.K. on either side, with mine in the middle."

"A self-portrait, Steve?"

"I'll sit by the mirror and draw myself as I waste away."

"For art's sake?"

"For the house," he said, filling the bong. "And when I'm done, Frank, I'm gonna **BURN** this place **DOWN!**"

By now I needed very much to take a shit. I told Steve and he pointed to a stack of newspapers in the corner.

"No," I said. "I will NOT shit on the kitchen floor."

"Why not? I'll bet C.K.'s still hungry."

"Christ, Steve, that's disgusting." I stomped off to the bathroom and pounded on the door. "Alright, Roger, this is IT! GET OUT! I NEED TO USE THE CRAPPER!"

No answer. I put my ear to the door and heard what sounded like the rustle of cigarette papers, then the pop of yet another beer being opened. C.K. trotted down the hall to stand beside me, sniffing and pawing.

I MEAN I, ROGER! OPEN THE DOOR OR I'M GOING TO **SHIT** IN YOUR BED!

Steve was standing behind me now, clucking his tongue. "It won't do any good," he said, picking up the easel C.K. had knocked over earlier and leaning it against the wall. "I tried to tell you, Frank."

"TO HELL WITH IT!" I put my hand on the knob and turned it - amazingly, it was unlocked. I flung the door wide - and in a single instant photographic flash of revelation vowed that I would never write or drink or crave the artist's life again. I would marry Anne, become a quiet college professor, raise children and grow peacefully, prosaically bald. Why did I say this to myself in that instant? Because, gentle reader, sitting on that cracked and slimy toilet was the grinning, mocking, loathsome embodiment of all that is implied by the term "Underground artist," the eidolon of all that is made possible through an unwholesome bachelor life of dreamy dissipation.

It was the demon spirit of all houses that eat people, blasted, evil places whose seedy ambiance, leads us into temptation, lures us into abandonment and finally, pushes us into madness and death! There enthroned upon the porcelain, a tall can of warm malt liquor clutched in one dripping claw and a roll-

your-own still smoking in the other, sat a reeking, tattered, putrid corpse. **IN THE FACE THAT HAD ONCE BEEN ROGER'S, JAWS MOVED ON EXPOSED HINGES IN TIME TO DEEP, BALEFUL LAUGHTER.** Laughter resonating from far below, below the echoing bowl of the toilet, below the rusted pipes beneath, indeed; the cacodemonic chuckling seemed to be coming from the very privy of Hell itself!

In an instant, the horror was compounded by C.K. rushing in and pouncing on a half-fleshed leg bone. With a hideous pop the leg was quickly worked free and dragged into the kitchen.

I turned to Steve with what must have been a quite comical expression of fright. He shook his head and laughed quietly. "I tried to warn you, Frank, this house isn't for everybody."

I was gibbering like a character in an H.P. Lovecraft story as Steve opened the front door to let me out. "All that trouble in the bathroom and you end up shitting your pants anyway. Oh well," he said, "go home to your girlfriend. That's where you belong."

Somehow my feet carried me down the cracked cement path to the sidewalk, away from the damned house; but before I left, I was impelled by some nameless force to go around to the side of the rotting structure where Steve's window looked out on a garden of twisted, weirdly undulating weeds.

There was nothing wrong with the weeds; but in the window I saw Steve sitting in his fungus chair, his posture twisted and warped like an expressionist painting, rapidly moving his pen across the artist's sketch-pad in his lap.



Right Gallery

Disturbing Sound and Dark Vision of John Bergin

By Anya Martin

Enter if you dare the strange, unsettling, astonishing imagination of artist/musician John Bergin. His solo recording projects—Trust Obey, C₁₇H₁₉NO₃, and others—produce music darker and more dissonant than Nine Inch Nails and have attracted the admiration of Trent Reznor and a small cult of appreciators of the more provocative edge of industrial rock. His artistic projects range from bizarre CD covers to epic, existential, noir graphic novels (definitely not your neighborhood Spider-Man) to most recently, a provocative Internet web site that seeks to expose its visitors to far more than a catalog of his recording label, Grinder. In another era, Bergin might have been dubbed a Renaissance Man. In the '90s, perhaps he's best termed as an "aesthetic terrorist" from Kansas City, Missouri, striving to continue to produce works that challenge the boundaries of both the sanitized post-punk wasteland and the super-hero-saturated-geek-boys-only comics industry.

Bergin erupted into the cutting edge of independent comics in 1990 with Ashes, a five-part series published by Caliber and nominated for a Harvey Award. He co-edited the groundbreaking horror/cyberpunk comics anthology, Bone Saw, with James O'Barr, the creator of The Crow, and teamed with O'Barr to produce a riveting alternative soundtrack to the movie's hip collection of '90s hitmakers (available as part of a limited hardcover edition of the original graphic novel from Graphitti Press). Then finally after numerous publishing delays, Kitchen Sink Press released From Inside, a disturbing epic graphic novel about a young pregnant woman on a "train to Hell."

In March, 1996, John Bergin offered Brutarian a scoop on an intriguing new twist on fantasy with A.A. Attanasio, a completed project called l.dopa, and his various recording projects, not to mention some frank comments on the sad state of the comics industry in general and censorship on the Internet...

BRUTARIAN: Let's start out with what sounds like your most exciting project at the moment, *The Dark Shore*. How did you get to know A.A. Attanasio and how did you come to collaborate on this project?

John Bergin: We've known each other for four or five years now. I just wrote him on a whim because I admire his work. That's how we met. He's actually the one who brought up the idea of a doing a graphic novel adaptation of his new novel. We've discussed the idea of collaborating on something for a long time. I was looking for something to do, and he was just starting *The Dark*

Shore, so he suggested the idea of a graphic novel adaptation.

BRUT: Have you started working on it?

JB: At this time we're still working on preliminary artwork—character designs, scenery, props, stuff like that. We're going to try to go outside the standard comic book publishing industry.

BRUT: So it hasn't been accepted by a publisher yet.

JB: Attanasio's book version has been. It will be published by Hodder and Stoughton in the UK sometime soon, and he just got a deal for the book with Avon. Actually, they want him to do two more books in the series. The story is basically the first time he has written anything that falls so completely in the category of fantasy.

BRUT: You've described *The Dark Shore* as "*From Inside Meets Legend*." When I think of you, *From Inside* makes sense obviously. But *Legend*? Is that because that's a Ridley Scott movie?

JB: I just mentioned *Legend* because that film has the obvious conventions you usually find in fantasy stories. You know, magic, sorcerers, unicorns, ogres. It's very interesting to see how Attanasio takes those elements and twists them to his unique vision. He adds some really cool



elements like demons, floating cities, and magic amulets that are used like drugs or body enhancements. Characters wear certain amulets to increase their intelligence, stay awake, or dream, and they place them on their bodies in certain configurations and over particular internal organs to make themselves jump higher, run faster, or be stronger. It's pretty cool. It's like he's taken the extremely typical cyberpunk elements and made them *organic*. I mean, these days *every* cyberpunk or SF story you read has characters in it with jacks in their skulls that they use to download information or they have cybernetically enhanced eyeballs or muscles or something. Attanasio's taken all that stuff and transformed it into organic devices. Magic amulets instead of skull-jacks, harnesses instead of armor. Spells instead of digital data.

BRUT: Knowing you, it sounds like it's going to make DC's Vertigo comics look like happy fairy tales?

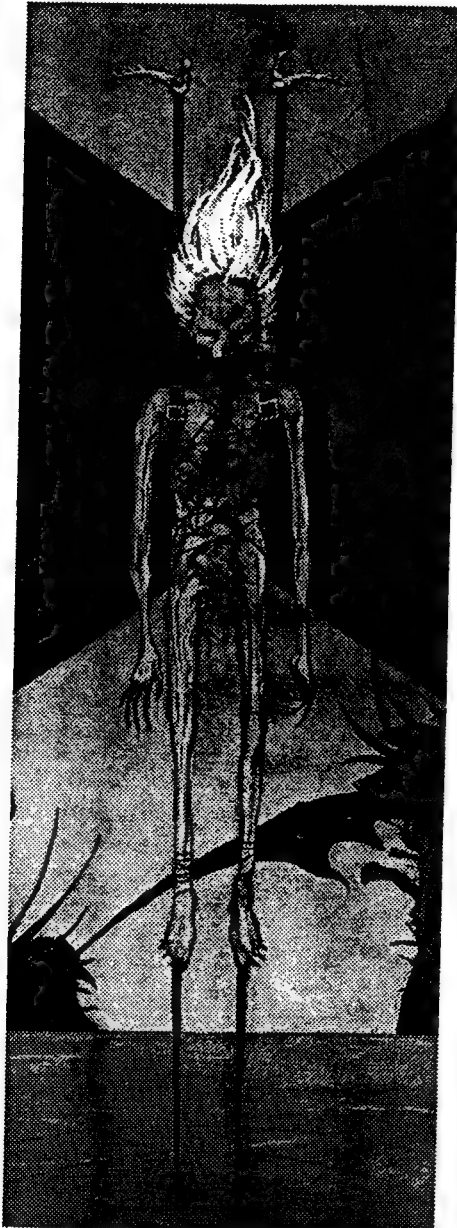
JB: They are, aren't they? That's why I mentioned *From Inside* in my description of *The Dark Shore*. You know my work, and what to expect. *The Dark Shore* is dark. It's very depressing and frightening in some parts.

BRUT: You've said that you've helped with concepts, plot themes, props, stuff like that? What contributions have you made to the project?

JB: OK, there's this sorcerer named Ralli-Faj. Attanasio originally designed this sorcerer as a bag of skin hanging on a stick. This sorcerer uses so much magic and has traveled so far outside of his body on astral journeys, all that's left is a bag of talking skin on a stick. Attanasio told me that, and I started working on some artwork and character sketches. I started off by wondering "How does this guy get around?" A simple thought like that is what usually gets me started. So I designed this whole elaborate two-legged stilt device that the sorcerer straps himself into. The stilts are made out of sharp sticks of hard wood. It moves sort of like a pair of scissors; the sticks are hollow and are infused with magic amulets—that's what 'powers' them. The bag of skin is tied to these stilts. That's how he moves around.

I really get into this sort of stuff. The details. I try to think of every little thing. I fully realize my creations; in my mind, they *are* real. Even though all this detail might not show up in a finished story, I believe it's still there in a way, reinforcing what you do end up seeing. I even made notes about how fast this thing can walk, how it goes up stairways, how it navigates over soft swampy soil. I even designed the sound it made when it was walking: "tok. tok. tok."

Anyway, I painted some sketches of this Ralli-Faj character. Gave everything to Attanasio;



*Art And Head Are
Those Of The Artist*



he took all that and *ran* with it. I was just amazed at how much he was able to make my *physical* designs so wholly realized. He was able to take my ideas and work them into the plot. For example, these stilts that I designed play an important part near the end of the story. Ralli-Faj uses the sharp points as a weapon. Even the sound effect—"tok. tok. tok"—became an important part of this character.

This project is one of the most exciting things for me. I mean having your comics made into a film is exciting, but watching your favorite author turn your images into his *words* is far more exciting, I think.

BRUT: So your ideas have also influenced the manuscript of the novel in addition to the graphic novel.

JB: Yes. Attanasio was writing the novel at the same time as I was designing things for the graphic version. It sounds silly to be going on so much about something as simple as character design, but that one activity has so much effect on a story—right down to the *plot*. It's kind of like an actor studying for a role. That sort of research reveals things that effect everything in a story.

BRUT: "Death of a Witch" is the introduction to *The Dark Shore*?

JB: Right, the prologue of the book. That's completed; it's a 15-page strip which will be appearing in *The Big Bigfoot Book* from Mojo Press... later this summer.

BRUT: What is Mojo Press? I don't think I'm familiar with them. Among all those Image and Marvel super-hero titles, it's really hard to pick out interesting and innovative comics now on the racks. Just looking at the line-up makes me feel out of touch, but then on the other hand I went into a local comics store in Atlanta that stocks a lot of independents and undergrounds and looked at everything in the store, and I didn't see it. And that's just the kind of store where I would imagine that kind of stuff would be.

JB: Mojo just published an anthology called *Weird Business*—a huge hardcover book—one of the best horror anthologies I've seen in a long time. Mojo is trying a lot of different things. They're not just talking about ways of surviving and growing in the current independent-hostile environment of comics today, they're actually *trying* different things—trying to find new markets, trying to find ways to reach new readers...

BRUT: *The Big Bigfoot Book* comes out this summer? And that's a collection of stories in which all have something to do with Bigfoot. What inspired Mojo to do that?

JB: Right. Rick Klaw, the managing editor, noticed a resurgence of interest in mysterious true-life monsters.

BRUT: Because of *The X-Files*?

JB: That could be. I don't know what's causing it. Maybe the fascination with '70s culture is causing it. You know, all those monsters from Bigfoot to Nessie were pretty huge in the '70s.

BRUT: Tell me about *L Dopa*.

JB: It's sitting at Dark Horse gathering dust....

It's a sort-of futuristic SF thing. Let's see: I'll say "*Blade Runner* meets *Frankenstein*, little bit of *The Wizard of Oz* and *Die Hard* thrown in..."

Story's about this guy who's brain has been downloaded into a tiny computer chip. The chip is stuck into a vat-grown body—a four foot tall gargoyle. This guy calls himself L Dopa. His wife is the daughter of the powerful business man who "owns" the city. They discover some horrible plans this businessman has and try to stop him. They fail. The girl is turned into a "Marilyn"—that's a mute prostitute surgically altered to look like Marilyn Monroe. The guy gets downloaded into the gargoyle body. He calls himself L Dopa because that's his drug of choice. He

takes it to suppress an endless film loop—that plays in his head—of the surgery that was conducted on his wife. She thinks he's dead—he never tells her who he is. The two are exiled to a warehouse. Chinese gangs kidnap the girl. L Dopa goes after them. That's pretty much where the story *starts*. It's been done for about a year now. Dark Horse is just sitting on it.

BRUT: Isn't that Dark Horse's reputation nowadays? Do they put out books any more that have nothing to do Aliens?

JB: I don't know. (laughs) I don't go to comic book stores. They have a just-barely legit reason for holding *L Dopa*. The story was originally going to be a back up for James O'Barr's *Gothik*, but that thing is a dead project. There's a lot of ugly legal shit that Dark Horse has to sort out with *Gothik* and James, contractual breaches and stuff like that. They want some of that cleared up before getting *L Dopa* out. They *will* print it, it's just a matter of finessing the details. Looks like it'll be two 24-page books.

BRUT: Is it black and white or color?

JB: It's black and white. It was fun to do. It was really, really different for me. You won't believe I did this thing when you see it—guns, tits, fist fights, guns, guns, sound effects... guns. It's the closest thing I've ever done to a traditional comic strip.

BRUT: You've said that sound effects seem like they're part of comics.

JB: Yeah. My favorite sound effect is one that James used in this little strip he did in *Strange Tales* back in the '80s. This guy is speeding along in a car. His dog, sitting in the passenger seat, leans out the window. The car is going so fast that the dog's face starts to disintegrate. The guy reaches over and pulls the dog back in. The sound of the dog being pulled back is "yank." Cracks me up every time I think about it.

BRUT: What other graphic projects are you working on right now?

JB: There's just too much to remember. I should keep a list in front of me all the time. There's *The Dark Shore*, a couple of book covers, a number of CD covers—a few for Brian Lustmord, a few for some other bands like Caul and my own musical projects, Trust Obey and my side project C₁₇H₁₉NO₃, a lot of CD designs.—a web site for The Machines of Loving Grace, *Hands of Clay*—which is a graphic adaptation of a Trust Obey song... I'm working on a couple of musical things, too. A Trust Obey cover of Ministry's "Revenge" for a Ministry tribute compilation. A remix I did for Terminal Sect just came out. Believe it or not, I just finished up about 12 hours worth of children's music I did for Hallmark Cards.

BRUT: It seems like you're always working on a million projects at once. How do you juggle them all?



"I Don't Go To
Comic Book
Stores."

JB: I work all the time.

BRUT: How did *From Inside* sell, when everything was all accounted for. It's now been two years since it was finally published after all those delays.

JB: *Those delays!* Man, that was a miserable time in my life. Everything that could have gone wrong with printing the thing *went* wrong. To tell you the truth, I really don't know how many copies were finally sold. I think it did okay, but I'm sure the numbers weren't impressively huge. I'd rather not know the exact number; I'm sure it would just depress me. As pessimistic as I am, I still have *some* hope for the comic book market. Evidence to the contrary really depresses me—there's so much of it.

BRUT: But it can still be ordered through Grinder or from Kitchen Sink?

JB: Yeah. It's still available from either place.

BRUT: After working so long to make *From Inside* a reality, how supportive do you feel the comic book industry is for someone like you, a writer/artist who is not doing super-heroes, not kid's stuff, but really interesting thought-provoking work? Is there room for you in the comic book industry right now?

JB: Right now? No. Absolutely not. To tell you the truth, writers like myself are getting squeezed out. I hate saying that and it's really depressing to say that. I'm always looking for proof that I'm wrong. I've described the comic book industry as being "ghettoized," and I think that's the major problem. Comics are the ghetto of the entertainment industry, both physically and content-wise. Physically, the only place you can buy a comic book is in a comic book store. I'm embarrassed to take friends to comic stores and say "this is what I do for a living." A few years ago I would've proudly showed off the incredible diversity. That's gone. Most readers who might enjoy my work do not enjoy the experience of visiting a hormone-infested comic book store... and respectable book stores would never stock anything so lowly as a comic book. I know publishers do manage to get comics into stores where people who don't normally read comics go—book stores or music stores—but what are they presenting to these people? Spider-Man graphic novels, Batman anthologies, Superman collections. Yeah, that will definitely entice new mature readers to start picking up comics. It's stupid to put shit like that into a book store. The people who read that junk are already served just fine by comic shops. We should be presenting these new potential readers with something that is *genuinely* mature and interesting.

Content-wise, comics have become just a place to market peripheral film properties and such to adolescent males. Good luck if you're a girl and interested in seeing what's new in comics.

BRUT: There's Lady Death.

JB: Sure, girls read that, but it's from a male perspective, isn't it? I shouldn't say, I've never read it. From what I've seen it looks like a typical male version of what a girl might like to read, i.e., spunky Goth chick. Not much depth there, not really. Of course I know girls do read and enjoy comics, but the market *is* geared for a very particular and narrow range of people. There is that group of women comic book artists; I forget the name they have for their group. Sorry, I think it's Mary Fleener, Julie Doucet, Dame Darcy. They get some support, some readers, but there really should be more support paid to this sort of stuff. Comics are just gonna die unless the idea of genuine diversity gets support from major publishers and distributors. It's a risk, but one that should be taken.

BRUT: Do you feel the industry was more open to work like yours five years ago?

JB: It was. It was even just a few years ago.

BRUT: People talk about DC's expansion of the Vertigo line as progressive. Do you think that it actually has opened up new opportunities for writers and artists to do something more thought-provoking or is it just a new version of rehashing the same ideas for a slightly older readership?

JB: I don't know their books very well; whenever I check any of them out, they don't seem to be really that innovative. I'm not putting them down. Those books are fine for what they are, but I

don't understand why everyone has this perception that they're doing something new and mature. Maybe by "mature," we mean 16-year-old males instead of 12-year-olds.

[They're] the only stuff I see on the comic book shelf that looks visually interesting, but they also look visually the same. Sure, some of them are visually interesting, but the ones that I read I couldn't tell what was going on with the story. I felt like I'd stepped into the middle of an *Iron Man* comic where all these things had already happened over the course of 200 issues and I was expected to be up-to-date with it all. And I really think that some of the panel design and pacing is just incredibly amateurish. Impossible to read and follow.

BRUT: Isn't it OK just to open up a mythology textbook and just take a few cool Gods and just throw them on a page?

JB: Uh-huh. Is there a lot of that going on? Isn't that called plagiarism?

BRUT: Who does excite you doing comics right now?

JB: There's nobody that I can think of. There's nothing. Wait, I've got someone for you, Michael Manning, a book called *The Spider Garden*, published by NBM. He's also got a book called *Menagerie* coming out soon and a sequel to *The Spider Garden* called *Hydrophidian*. I also enjoyed *Pixie* by Max Andersson, *Hell Baby* by Hideshi Hino, and there are a lot of mainstream books I enjoy. I like a good *Aliens* story as much as anyone else. I like Mike Mignola's work, Frank Miller, etc.

BRUT: Do you see any hope on the horizon for comics?

JB: Maybe. Hopefully the super-hero shit will crash and make room for the rest of us. Independent publishers are out there. Readers need to make an effort to seek out better books. It really does take effort.

BRUT: Is there ever going to be another *Bone Saw*?

JB: No, I don't plan on it.

BRUT: When is Trust Obey's CD coming out now?

JB: I'm not sure. The situation is incredibly fluid right now, so I can't say too much, but I can say that I might be leaving the label.

BRUT: The album's called *Hands of Ash*. What relationship does it have to your prior release, *Hands of Ash*?

JB: That cassette release had two songs on it that were re-recorded.

BRUT: Is it otherwise all new material?

JB: Yeah.

BRUT: The story as to how you ended up with Interscope has to do with you meeting Trent Reznor. How did you meet him and how did that evolve?

JB: It was mostly through mutual friends. A friend of mine named Gareth Branwyn (the senior editor for *Boing Boing Magazine*) knew Trent was looking for new bands to sign. Trent had already heard my stuff. When Gareth forwarded my new and unsigned work to him, he signed me.

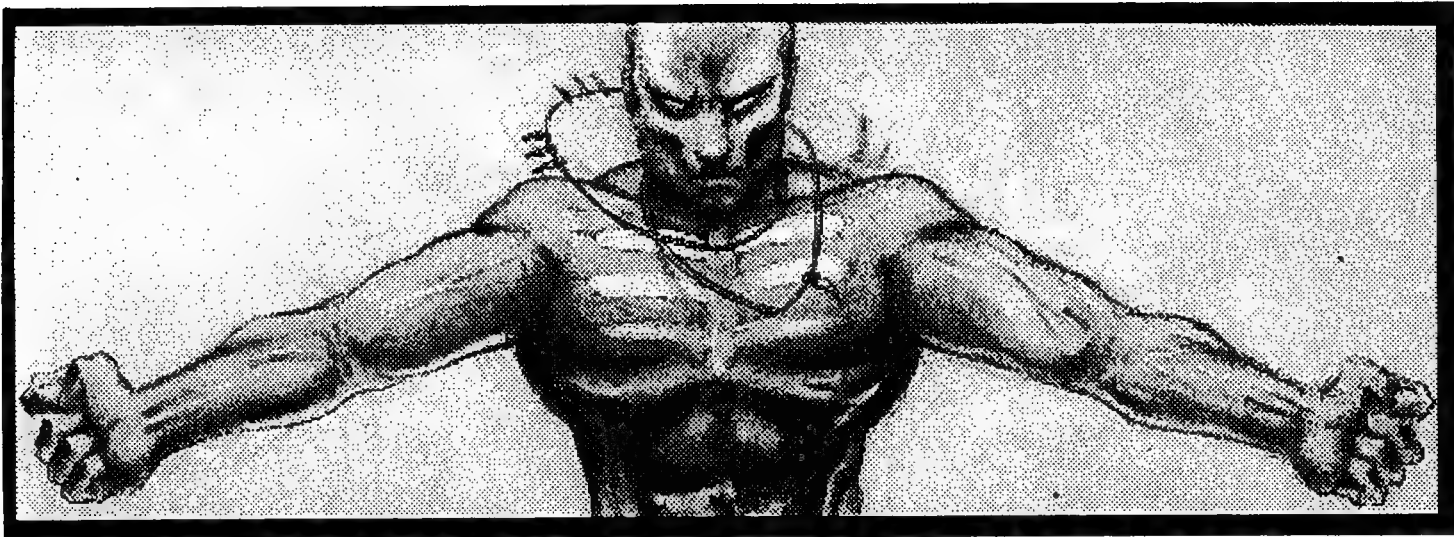
BRUT: You have several other musical projects, what's going on with them?

JB: For $C_{17}H_{19}NO_3$, I have a CD coming out February 20th called *Terra Damnata*, which is mostly new stuff, plus a couple of previously released songs

BRUT: How do you differentiate what you do with Trust Obey versus what you do with $C_{17}H_{19}NO_3$ or some other project?

JB: C_{17} allows me to do things I wouldn't normally do as Trust Obey. C_{17} is a little more experimental. Trust Obey has a very specific and intense vision, C_{17} can be anything—*anything goes*. Trust Obey has an angrier, raging, and hostile sound. C_{17} offers me a chance to be more introspective and eclectic. Trust Obey is like an amputation with a rusted chain saw. C_{17} is a fine, surgical operation using intricate and mysterious tools. You wouldn't even notice your leg is missing...until you tried to stand up.

BRUT: Who are your influences musically?



JB: As far as music goes, I pretty much listen to soundtrack music of all types all the time. I like musical works that have a theme or a connecting vision, and soundtracks or classical music are about the only place you normally find that. Composers like Mark Isham, Peter Gabriel, Elliot Goldenthal, Brian Lustmord, Wojciech Kilar, Maurice Jarre, James Horner, Jorgen Knieper; bands like Big Black, Godflesh, Foetus, Swans, Puncture. I also like new classicists like Arvo Part or Henryk Mikolaj Gorecki and older ones like Bartok or Tchaikovsky. Otherwise I listen to pretty much what anyone would expect me to—the usual list of suspects. People have compared C17 to In Slaughter Natives, and I'd say that's fair. I like J. Havukainen's work. People have compared Trust Obey to Godflesh or Ministry.

BRUT: So how does your musical work mesh with your visual work?

JB: It's really all the same to me. I create because I'm compelled to do so. I work in whatever medium feels right. I enjoy being able to approach a single concept from the many different angles that I work in: music, comics, sculpture, photography, whatever. Each can reveal something different about a single idea.

I've noticed that my mind works differently, though, for each medium. It seems to grind most efficiently when I'm painting or drawing—probably because I've been doing that the longest. Those synapses are permanently soldered *on*. So, if I had to pick a medium, it would probably be the visual artwork. But, really, with CD-ROMS and such these days, why not do everything? There's finally an emerging medium that will be able to adequately capture and present the sorts of multi-media work that someone like me does.

BRUT: I visited the Grinder Web Site earlier tonight. How did you develop the web site, because it does seem as if it's meant to be more than a catalog or an advertisement. What's your concept for the art exhibits, for example?

JB: Well, it's like a gallery. I'm trying to show work by artists and writers that I admire and that I think people would enjoy.

BRUT: Are you worried about this censorship on the Internet mania?

JB: Yeah, I'm very worried about it... I just don't get it. People have this irrational fear of the Internet. I just do not get it. People are going on and on about "protecting the children!" Give it a break. How about *parenting* the children instead of this so-called "protection." We're putting up an exhibit of Michael Manning's work. It's definitely "Adults Only" material. But why should that be a problem? This is work *by* adults *for* adults. The work has legitimate value and artistic merit. Why sacrifice that simply because of some lazy and uncaring parents?

BRUT: That's sort of like an invitation, too. To keep the kids away, it seems like you almost have to put "This is really boring, just fluffy stuffed animals, cute dolls; This is the Barbie exhibit, you don't want to look at this, go away, kids!"

JB: Keeping kids from seeing things they are too young to understand should be society's job—there's nothing wrong with saying that—but the specific day-to-day supervising should be a parent's job. Enacting laws that trample all over *other people's* freedom is the wrong way to do it. Society's job is to help provide tools for the parent, but not at the expense of other people. Those tools do exist *right now*; parents just need to take some interest in their child's activities. Usually that's all that's needed.

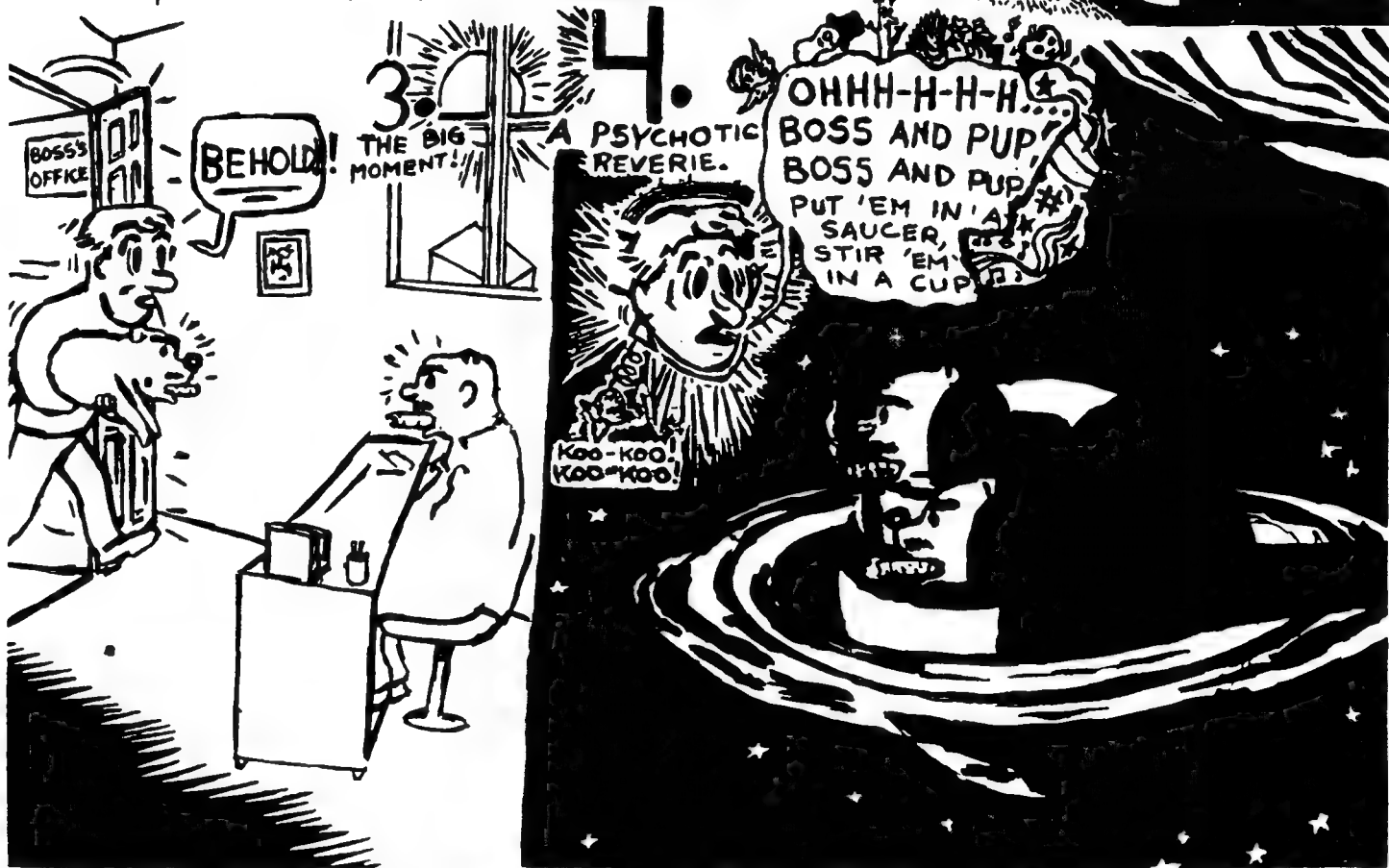
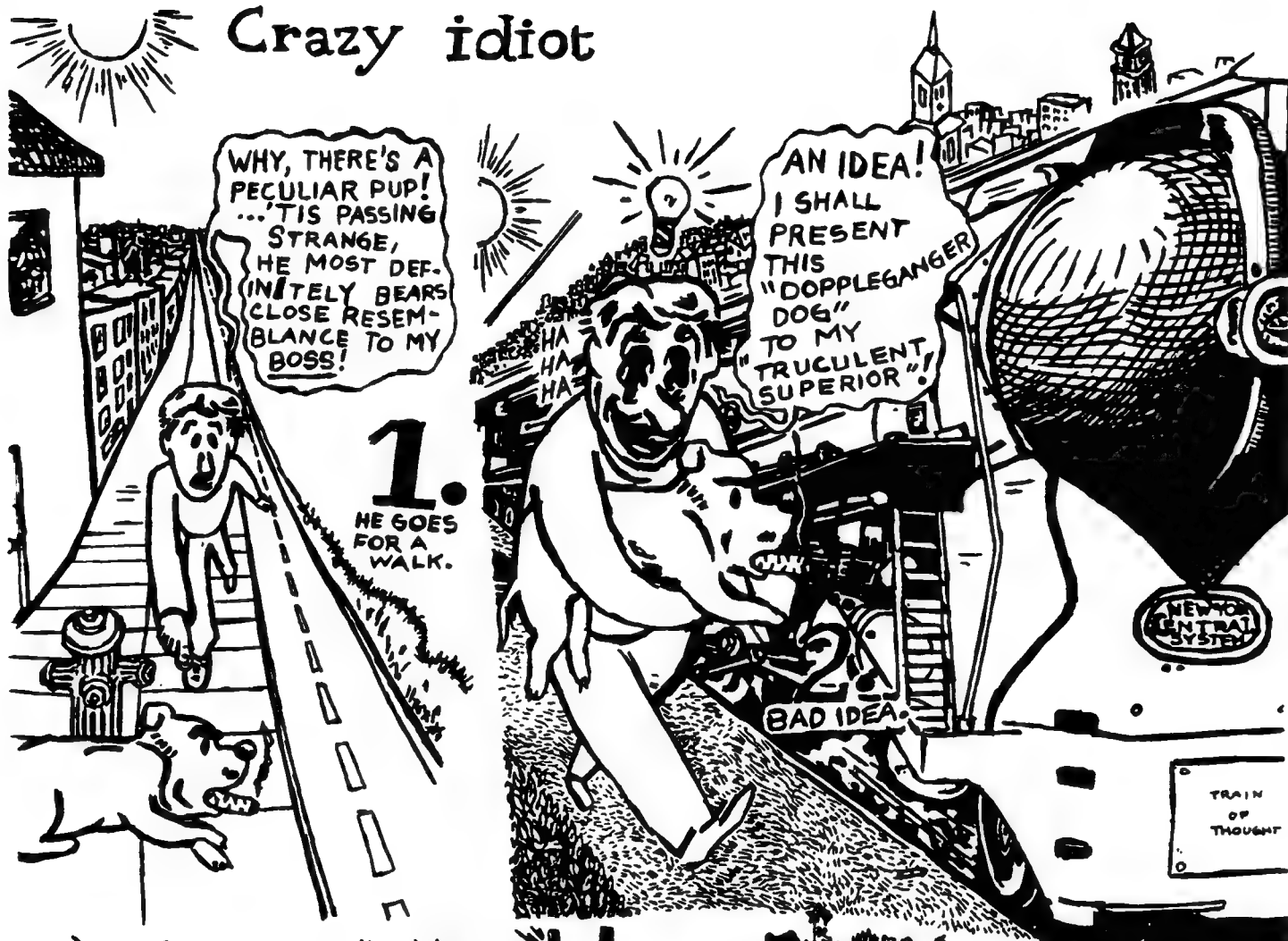
BRUT: It's like all our problems are going to be solved by a chip in a television set, too. How many people are going to be employed just to code every minute of TV programming?

JB: It's pretty silly. That v-chip is so stupid. Don't just plop your kid in front of a TV. Take some interest in *his* interests. That's all it takes. Values and ethics come from people teaching people, not from stupid computer chips and laws. We have progressed so far since our days as Neanderthals, haven't we?

The Grinder Web Site can be found at <http://beryl.emerald.net/grinder/>. To obtain a catalog of CDs and cassettes from Grinder or copies of From Inside and other unconventional comics, write to P.O. Box 45182, Kansas City, MO 64171.



Crazy idiot





NO REDNECKS ON THESE BOYS

It turned out to be a good thing I was too broke to bring along a bottle of Jack. Hell, I was too goddamned busted to afford even a couple of sixes of Bud come to think of it. But it turned out alright.

*Didn't think it would at first. 'Cause while these cowpunks songs about peckerwood white trash and backwoods insanity are principally satirical - and howlingly funny to boot - the compositions just hit too close to home. Nothing wrong with that, that's why Nine Pound Hammer is so **damn good**; still what the verisimilitude meant to me was that I shouldn't be greeting them empty-handed. Didn't think they'd cotton to that. Besides their pr photos were pretty scary: Camera placed at foot level, the boys glowering balefully into the distance. They looked like the kind of folk who beat up assholes just on general principle. Especially assholes like me who were asking for some of their time and didn't have the good manners to bring a little whisky to pass around as a way of saying thanks.*

*So I approached the combo with as much deference as I could muster. Gave 'em all a good, firm handshake and came right out with the fact that I knew I should've brought something but I was just as broke as broke could be and had to siphon gas out of my neighbors car just so I could get my fully restored 66 cobalt blue **GTO** down to the club and I hope they understood.*

Then I closed my eyes and waited for the blow to the head.

It never came. I got some slaps on the back, choruses of "Boy Howdys!" and "Nice to meet yas" and a bottle of cold beer thrust into my sweaty palm.

*Yip, the aggregate otherwise known as Nine Pound Hammer turned out to be suave, funny and self-effacing. Fact is, tall, dark and handsome bass playing Matt Bartholomy was so unassuming I thought he was **cataronic**. Till I learned he just liked to let his bass do the talking for him.*

The rest of the Hammers was pretty regular too. Well sort of. Guitarist Blaine Cartwright confessed to having seen Texas Chainsaw Massacre over thirty times while lead singer Scott Luallen admitted to viewing Massacre II at least sixty times and could recite by rote the conversations and monologues from the two Les Jesko documentaies. The drummer, this big burly fellow, all man and a yard wide, sported a Conway Twitty kind of doo, sunglasses, and a physiognomy crossing Roy Orbison with Elvis. A persona most men, at least south of the Mason-Dixon, would kill to affect. And he'd seen drive-in movies Joe Bob Briggs, I have little doubt, isn't even dimly aware of.

*And none of 'em drink Jack. Yes sir, it's the truth. Blaine drank bourbon once in high school, got sick, and hasn't touched the stuff since. Scott thinks Mr. Daniels is rotgut and sticks to Wild Turkey 101 Proof and when he can't get that, **Maker's Mark** (they also make an excellent barbecue sauce tho it's a little expensif). The rhythm section sticks to Rolling Rock. And all of them love pot. And wish the crowds who come to see them would smoke more of it.*

So I had a grand auld tyme. Got along so well I went to see them the next night in Baltimore. Had an even better tyme and after helping them load up after the show took 'em all home to Casa Brutarian where we spent the weekend talkin' and generally cuttin' up. What follows has been pieced together from our little tete a tete at the D.C. show.

Brut: So where did the name come from? I lost the press release.

Scott: It's from an old Merle Travis song. He's from Muhlenberg County down where we live in Owensboro, Kentucky. It's a coal mining song. Traditional song, basically and we just decided to use it.

Brut: You're all friends of Aaron Lee, a contributor of ours. And of the late, much lamented combo **Penis** Your Majesty.

Nine Pound Hammer: Yeah, he's at *Hustler* now!

Brut: Trying to dodge a slobbering Larry Flynt and his gold plated wheelchair I hear.

Blaine: Penis was like a Devo thing. Opened up for Pain Teens at a club in Lexington and it was packed mainly, and this is true, for Penis. They did an outdoor show at the University of Kentucky and the rumors preceding them had the organizers in fear of the college radio station being shut-down if any alumnus happened to walk by while they were playing. They were forbidden to curse but the drummer came out dressed like **Jesus carrying a ten foot cross**. And from there it got more insane.

Scott: Songs were really fucked up. Masturbation and shit seemed to be the focus of a lot of it.

Brut: Well *your songs are pretty fucked* up too. The

language can get rather raw at times. Any complaints about it?

Blaine: Never.

Scott: Well there was this bitch at *Alternative Press*. I don't know what her problem was, she just savaged us. She just didn't get it. Like the opening song on our last release, "Hayseed Timebomb" has a line in it about

"**hunting queers.**"

Well, it's written in the third person and obviously meant to be a satiric take, a vicious take, on that kind of mindset. And then with "Skin A Buck" well it's the same set-up. But her response: "Oh please. Skin a buck? Oh really!"

Brut: But I did see a laudatory piece on you somewhere. Where was it? *Maximum Rock 'n' Roll*?

Blaine: No, they won't review any Crypt [the band's label] releases any more.

Scott: It was in *Flipside* and the interviewers were from Croatia. Can you believe that? We're much bigger in Europe than over here anyway. But that's the case with a lot of **Crypt** bands.

Brut: How long have you all been together?

Blaine: We've been together ten year but Bob our drummer has only been with us five months. We've had a lot of drummers.

Brut: Why?

Scott: Because, with the exception of two of them, they all wanted to change things. Try to

rewrite our songs, basically. Bob doesn't feel the need to do that.

Blaine: The last one said, "Man I want to get to the point where I'm making \$5,000 dollars a week. Keith Richards is making \$25,000 dollars a week so I'll settle for \$5,000 dollars."

Brut: So you all have day jobs then?

Blaine: *I drive an ice cream truck.* Have to move to Austin where it can be a year round gig. But once school starts I'm free again.

Brut: How much of the songwriting is based on experience and how much an active imaginative interpolation? You haven't actually eaten "fried squirrel" or "pork brains" have you?

Scott: Oh yeah!

Blaine: A lot of the more unappetizing stuff was courtesy of our old drummer. But I had a long list for the song "Run Fat Boy, Run" and it was just a matter of making it rhyme.

Brut: Having any nightmares about Bob Dole making you the showpiece for his censorship campaign? There's a lot of wonderful material to mine here.

Blaine: Hell, it's just the way we talk. I was contemplating which of four songs we should do for our hot breakout MTV video and every one of them has the word "fuck" in it. But still it shouldn't be a problem. It's just the way we talk down there. I mean, what's the big deal? I had a friend tell me recently I should

use it only to be shocking. In other words, use the f-word occasionally. But from where I'm from it's almost a form of punctuation.

Scott: Well you say "fuck" more than most people.

Blaine: Probably so.

Brut: But you haven't said it until just now.

Scott: No but he said it a lot right just here so it kind of averages out.

Blaine: Well I pick my spots I suppose. I won't say it when I'm around parents. And I won't use it when I'm driving the ice cream truck.

Brut: Good policy. Could hurt sales. "What the fuck do you want?" "Nah kid, we're out of fucking toasted almond. Go fuck yourself. Have a popsicle jet. It's cool and less fucking filling."

Blaine: But when we're back with our own it's not a problem.

Brut: Ever think you'll run out of inspiration mining the backwoods?

Blaine: I don't want it to become shtick. But it is where we live. It is from the gut.

Brut: Well you draw on brilliance as well. Johnny Cash and Buck Owens were used on the last release . . .

Scott: Jerry Lee and "Folsom Prison" has always been a staple. Hank Williams Sr. "Long Gone Daddy" we were doing almost from the beginning. Snare and the Idiots was even covered on the last thing.

Blaine: This fabulous raucous band from Cincinnati. We've wanted to cover their stuff for so long

Brut: Who makes the decision on what songs to use for each release? Is it a democratic process?

Scott: God, we go into the studio and we barely have enough material most times for a single release. We came up with a couple of things right in the studio to fill out the last one. If any other member comes up with a song, though, we're all glad to give it a listen. To consider it.

Scott: Although this tour has been kind of frustrating. We've played shows during the week and nobody came. In Greensboro, North Carolina two girls showed up and that was it. If they hadn't seen us at the Sleazefest in Chapel Hill a couple of days before we would have been alone. Plus we're getting no promotion so many times the people who might be curious about us don't even know we've pulled in.



Brut: How have you managed to stay together for ten years without making enough money to make it a full time career? It must get very frustrating at times.

Blaine: We've been pulling for each other from the beginning. That's what helps it work. It wasn't like we were jumping on the bandwagon of a movement or anything. When we first moved to Lexington, we weren't even musicians really. We were friends who loved the music and it grew from there.

Blaine: Europe though is a different story. We play before fairly big crowds. And a lot of fans ask for our autograph. It's nice. Nice to be appreciated. Although being signed to Crypt was really a fine way of being told you've got it. Most of our favorite bands are on Crypt and we're glad to be part of the label.

Brut: Did Estrus ever make a bid for the band?

Blaine: No and that's fine. It's a decent organization but when I

think Estrus, I think *surf life*. Or predictably. So who wants to be a part of that?

Scott: It's overkill. Link Wray and Charlie Feathers made great records but is it necessary to do them to death in garage style?

Brut: So do you have problems trying to live up or live down your redneck images?



Scott: Ah no, because really at most, **we're suburban rednecks**. And the lyrics show that we're not well, Antiseen. I mean I've been to tractor pulls and watched a few wrestling matches in my life but really we're talking suburban here.

Blaine: When we were younger we had a love-hate relationship with rednecks and redneck

culture . . .

Scott: Whatever that is . . .

Blaine: . . . it's like anything else . . . we make fun of the extreme rednecks but that's the extreme. But no one considers themselves a redneck. You can go up to your caricature hillbilly and they just wouldn't put themselves in that category. Most of the people in

circle . . . chicken wire matches in front of three hundred people in a small smokey rooms.

Scott: There was a reference on the first album.

Blaine: And what is it with the mentally challenged always getting the good seats at the matches? Do these people know somebody.

Brut: It is amazing. I've often thought of taping my eyes back before getting in line to purchase tickets to a show.

Blaine: I've never understood it. Back home they just wheel a lot of them right up front. It's a mystery. The mentally challenged's enthusiasm and pull that is.

Brut: I think it's because they think it's real. Although I've met scores of normal people at matches who think the same way. And how you could consider anyone who believes wrestling isn't faked as normal is beyond me.

Scott: What's even more amazing to me is how these wrestlers get away without being killed. ***Has there ever been a wrestler who was killed by an angry fan?***

Blaine: I don't think so but I miss the small packed houses of two to three hundred people. All engrossed with big guys pretending to beat the hell out of one another. And because we're talking small circuit here you'd invariably get to see incredible gaffes. One night, I recall two combatants doing the bit where the bad guy reaches into his tights to get the dreaded foreign object. With the referees back turned of course. Well, somehow the illegal stick or whatever it was

the deep rural south we've found to be wonderful people.

Brut: One thing that does distress me about the lyrics is the absence of wrestling references.

Blaine: Ah, its gotten so out of hand. It's kid stuff today. Blatantly commercial.

Scott: Jerry Lawler and Memphis wrestling in its heyday was a gas . . .

Blaine: We're kind of purists when it comes to the squared

got knocked into the air and landed at the edge of the ring. Now who's sitting in the front row but this **old lady in a**

walker. She starts reaching into the ring to get whatever it was to show to the referee. The crowd is howling and everyone inside the squared circle was in a panic because it was obviously too early in the match for a disqualification. But the ref obviously couldn't retrieve it, the wrestlers were hooked up so they couldn't reach it and so there was this septuagenarian reaching, reaching . . .

Brut: Let me guess, the ref ended up accidentally kicking the foreign object out of the ring . . . What I continue to find amazing in this day and age is the fact that so many fans believe this work is real. At a Wrestlemania show in Indianapolis a few years ago, I was sitting in the most expensive seats in the house having purchased them in the mistaken belief that those who could afford to pay five hundred dollars to watch Hulk Hogan, Ric

Flair, et al, were incapable of even beginning to entertain the notion that any part of it was not scripted. Boy, was I in for a surprise. I almost got in a fight with several fans for laughing and pointing out the dreadful acting by the lunkheaded Hogan during a sequence in which he was supposedly being mercilessly pummeled. Suddenly I found myself being inundated with abuse. Fans coming at me from all sides. "What you saying, boy. You think that's fake. Why don't I just pop you one and we'll see whether you bleed." Jesus, you would have thought I'd just spit on their grandmother's graves.

Scott: Good thing it wasn't any of the wrestlers. Most of those guys are incredible athletes and can put you in a world of pain.

Blaine: But the holds are fake.

Brut: No, they're not. Ask Richard Belzer or that neo-conservative creep from 20/20 who got clocked by Dr. Death. I personally have had the figure-four leg lock slapped on by The Pope of Ohio and can testify it hurt like hell.

Scott: You're a weird guy Dom.

[At this juncture I had to leave for a moment so local curiosity and demi-legend, Brian Horowitz of Date Bait and Ubangis fame took over for me]

Brut: So any of you guys remember your first orgasm?

Scott: You mean today?

Brut: No ever. Were you thinking of a celebrity? I remember for me, it was Linda Carter.

Scott: I had a big crush on her too. My next door neighbor's mom looked like her and I fantasized about her a lot.

Brut: If Linda, who lives in Potomac, Maryland, shows up tonite and only one of you guys get to fuck her who would it be? Would you fight each other for the privilege of **fuoking Wonder Woman?**

Blaine: Nah. She ain't worth breaking up a friendship or band over.

Scott: Boy though she looked good with her things hanging out in *Billie Joe & The Outlaw* so I couldn't say for sure we wouldn't fight.

Brut: Would you go through Lyle Waggoner to get to her?

Blaine: Sure. Why not?

Brut: Alright, let's ask a serious question. **Now if you had to fuck Amy Carter to get to Lynda Carter would you do it?**

Blaine: Amy? Yeah, I have no problem with Amy.

Brut: Suppose Jimmy Carter got to watch and masturbate while you screwed Lynda?

Blaine & Scott: No problem. Not a problem.

[At this point I return and Brian goes to set up with The Ubangis who are opening for Hammer on this night.]

Scott: Dom we though you were weird but Brian he's a whole nother kind of weird.

Brut: Rolling Rock drinkers, next time I'll know what to bring.

Blaine: It's probably a good idea that you didn't. We

smoke pot mostly anyway.

Brut: Does it help or hinder in performing and writing?

Blaine: Helps put me in another head. If I'm stoned all the time and then I stay straight for a few days, that helps too. If you do it all the time after awhile it's like having a cup of fucking coffee. If you do it a lot your tolerance goes way up and the effect is negligible. Kind of like beer actually. The first time I got drunk on beer I was practically hallucinating. Now the most that ever happens is I may slur a few words.

Brut: So tell me about Tim, the guiding light of Crypt, your

record company. He impresses me with his energy and adeptly balanced manic writing style. He also impresses me in appearing not to require sleep.

Blaine: Exactly. Four or five hours a nite tops and always on the move. Let me give you a snapshot of Tim: It's four am and we're hanging out in his place watching movies. Suddenly he's in the room. Shades on. He's never without his prescription sunglasses. Real dark glasses. Twenty-four hours a day. He's brushing his teeth, looking around and says, "What are you guys doing up?" Then turns, looks at the clock on the wall, and laughs, "Hell, what am I doing up?" and trundles off to bed. Wild. This is a man who almost got thrown out of a club for hurling a bottle at The New Bomb Turks. The Turks, bestselling band on his label. Not that he was mad or anything. He

was just having a good time.

That's Tim, man. He's insane. He's got phone numbers all over his arm and hands so not to lose those important contacts.

Brut: How did you get signed by him?

Blaine: We asked. People want to get signed by Crypt so they go looking for the label. It's just a damn good company to be with. We consider it an honor to be on the label.

Brut: So what else shall we talk about?

Blaine: Fuck it. Turn off the tape and lets get to know one another. You seem more interesting than the average rock journalist. Now what did you think of *Chainsaw 3*? Be honest.



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(In their opinion)

A black and white cartoon illustration. In the center is a globe with a complex, woven pattern. A large speech bubble originates from the globe, containing the text: "We'd like to teach the world to sing in perfect harmony!". The speech bubble has musical notes and a small "H.M." signature. Surrounding the globe are six circular portraits of different people: a woman with a flower in her hair, a man with a wide, toothy grin, a person with a large nose, a person with a large mustache, a person with a large nose, and a person with a large nose. The background is dark with several five-pointed stars and a crescent moon.

Nice! And you're just another bourgeois dilettante who thinks he is making some sort of "statement" when all you're really doing is the only thing you were ever taught to do... Shopping!!

Dude, check it out, they're yelling at each other!

Whoa!

That is such bullshit! You hear me?! Bullshit!! We're changing the world without you and you can't stand it!!

I wonder what they're hollerin' about?

I'm sorry Baboon, but all you're doing is helping create new products for the privileged out of the pain of the truly oppressed. You're not a movement, you're a consumer focus group!

I think the old dude is pissed cuz the geek spent all the money shopping.

Huh.

All I want to do is talk to you, and all you do is insult me and everything I believe in! What is wrong with you?!

You think they're doing each other?

I don't want to know that!

Wrong With Me? You call me a bitter old man and a hippy, what do you expect, a kiss?

OK, I'll stop. So what's your almighty fucking point?

My point, Dooley, is that countercultures, especially yours, are one of the most highly developed forms of capitalist co-optation-the gentrification and commodification (sic) of the Left!

A condition where alienation is not only trivialized, but sold back to its victims for profit!

Yes, but we're stopping that by exposing those persons and labels who sell us out!

It won't work! By creating a community seemingly outside corporate control you're merely giving their presentation an exotic and threatening patina that only adds increased commercial legitimacy to the eventual end product.

You're so full of shit!

Look Maw! Punks on the teevee!

Oh Jahsus!!

I'm full of shit? While you fine fellows babble endlessly about the purity of your goddamn record labels the right wing has taken over the entire country and is destroying 50 years of progressive legislation!!

Old ladies will get thrown into the street this winter and all you seem to think is important is whether or not your New colored vinyl singles have barcodes on them!!!

You've completely lost your mind haven't you, Beardo.

It's like everything I've ever known is gone + I'm living in an alien, evil world!

My dad said that once, just before his dirt nap.

Nico, The End - James Young
(1992) Overlook Press

The Velvet Years : Warhol's
Factory 1965-67 - Tillman &
Shore (1995) Thunder's Mouth

With the recent critical success of the
documentary film centering on the above-
mentioned, thought it might be a good time
to hip you to this bio.

Another postcard from over the edge and
down on the floor.

Remember Nico? No? Well, that's ok. She
was foisted upon the Velvet Underground
back in the 60's by Andy Warhol. They
needed a chanteuse. Or so the great
Butthola thought. Lou Reed had other ideas
but had to swallow hard and accept Andy's
little gift to the band in order to descend his
own stairway to Confusion Worse
Confounded.

So, what does that have to do with anything?

Good question.

Just attempting to place Nico in her proper
context: an icy demiurge given fifteen
minutes of fame with the New York artsy-
fartsy, jack-off crowd i.e. the Factory.

She could sorta sing, too.

Had a real weird deep voice.

Cut a couple of her own discs after the Velvet
Misanthropes scattered. So so kinda shit but
intriguing in its own morbid sort of way.
Especially the debut, Chelsea Girls with all
those great maudlin folkie songs from the
likes of Reed, Cale and yes, her boyfriend at
the time (so the story goes) Jackson Browne.

So that's who Nico was, I say "was" on
account of her being quite dead at the
present time. Been that way since the late
80's in fact.

James Young (who I would guess to be still
among the living right this minute) blundered
into a position of playing keyboards in the
groups Nico lurched around Europe and
elsewhere with before turning up stiff as a
carp (Nico not Young) for no good reason.



danny Hellman

Turns out Jimmy kept his eyes open. The whole time.

Which is a lot more than Nico or most of the rest of her entourage were doing.

Nico was a junkie.

Big time smack freak.

And so, with little advance warning, brother Young's slim volume metamorphoses from just-another-ho-hum-marginal-rock-star bio into an amazingly cutting and perceptive account of the putrescent life of a heroin addict.

And it's crackerjack stuff. Really good.

James may have fallen by mistake into perhaps the best of all possible venues for examining the ways of junkiedom - the rock demimonde - but he has recompensed Dame Fortune by beautifully recreating Hell.

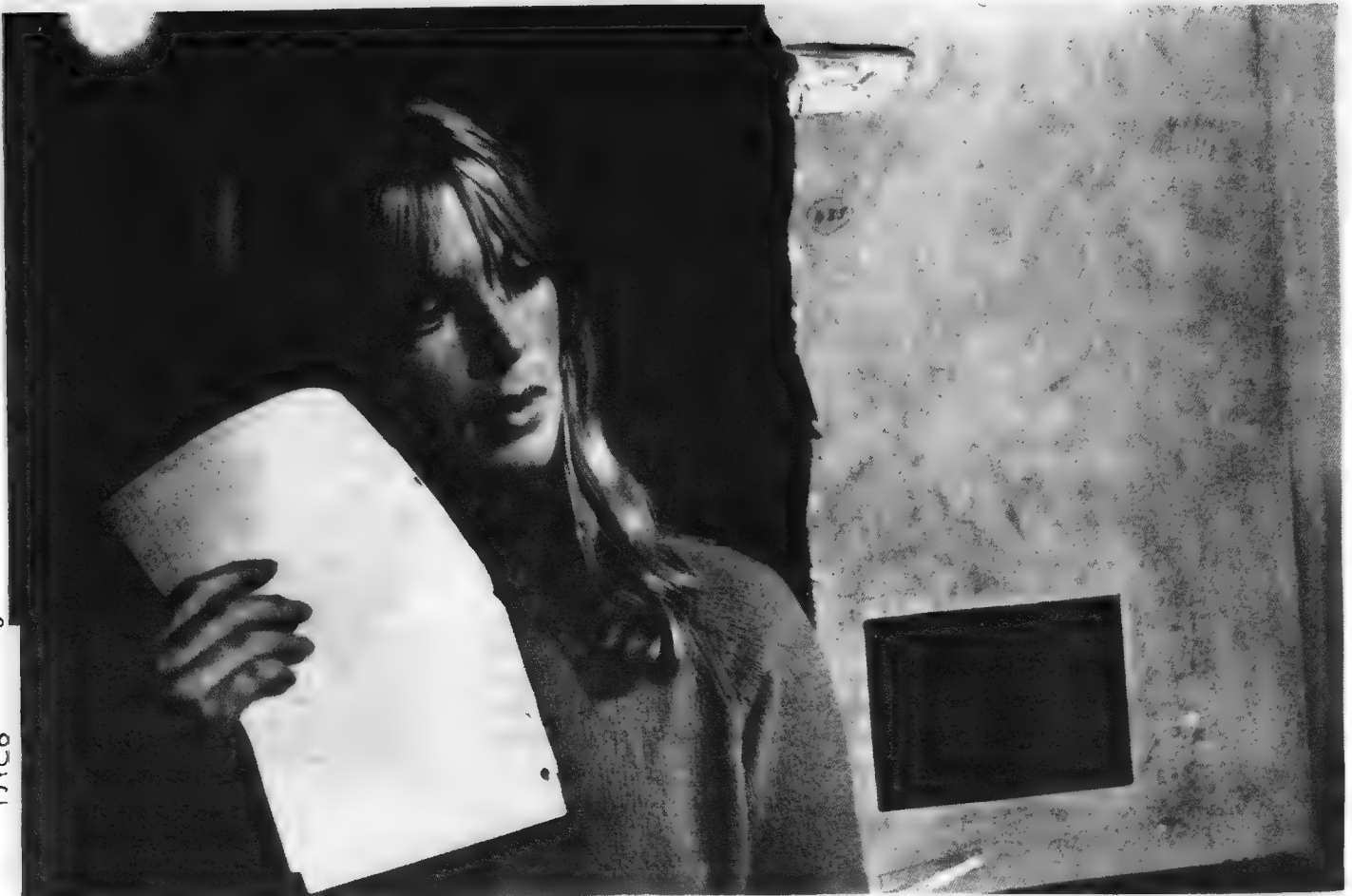
And Hell is what it is. There's no other word for it really.

This little gem of a book is also quite funny. James has a gift for recreating hilarious dialogue which concomitantly evokes images of death and decay. Weird, huh? But he pulls it off all the same.

That this self-destructive, semi-talented singer-songwriter was also a supernally alluring woman who, seemingly, could have had anything she wanted lends weight and substance to this semi-comic tale.

Apparently all she wanted was junk.

Nico by STEPHEN SHORE (THE VELVET YEARS)



Nico & Velvets cont.

Here's the deal boys and girls: Don't be so damn quick with your wishes for fame and fortune. You just might get it. Better you stay home and do the dishes maybe. It's safer.

THE VELVET YEARS is a chronicle of sorts of a two year period in the Warhol Factory and kinda a great way to both see and feel the place where Nico was coming from. Artistically and emotionally. This was a time when everything and nothing was happening. Or is that nothing as something? Or nothing from nothing leaving nothing? Well, I guess that I just don't know. And it doesn't matter really 'cause as the late great Sterling Morrison says somewhere inside: "This book is possible, not because the people are interesting, but because the photographs are."

Well, the photographs are stunning: Lucid, luminous, otherworldly studies in black, white and gray. But the reminiscences and disconnected quotes of the famous, not-so-famous, and fashion casualties which serve as accompanying text ain't bad either. Lou Reed refused to participate for some reason (he's a prick?), but all of the rest of VU did and, as we all know, Cale, Morrison and Tucker rarely bore. Paul Morrissey lets us know what we suspected all along: "... nobody has the vaguest idea of what was going on back then." Writer and critic Donald Lyons confirms it: "Andy's art really never made any sense to me..." - James MacLaren w ds

The Psalms of Herod - Esther M. Friesner (1995) White Wolf

What would the world be like if the only organized force to survive Armageddon was a strict Christian Fundamentalist sect all too similar to the "religious" right? Esther Friesner has seen it, and it's not pretty.

The stark, reactionary world of **The Psalms of Herod** is the apocalyptic result of Old Testament revisionism gone amok. Whatever technology the world once enjoyed was lost in the Fall long ago, when (as the Holy Book says) Man was cast out of God's good graces because he was led astray by Satan working through woman, who'd become far too headstrong and proud. Now most folk live on steads, widely spaced rural communities getting by at or near subsistence levels. Regional granges disperse information and the occasional new bit of agricultural lore. Beyond lies the city, where men, and their wives, live in unimaginable luxury.

Steads are ruled by male 'alphs,' and all adult women in the stead are regarded as the alph's wives, in accordance with holy writ. As punishment for their excessive pride, God has changed women's bodies so that they are physically unable to have intercourse more than once or twice a year, when the muscles that have closed off the vagina relax to allow menstruation. When called to satisfy the alph's or another man on the stead, an 'out of season' woman must do so with diligent application of hands and mouth. Daughters begin training for this important task early in life, practicing with wooden phalluses. Such skills are taken very seriously, for women who fail to perform adequately can face severe punishment, up to, and including, death. Death is likewise a fitting punishment for those who commit the sick sin of loving one of their own gender. And we won't even get into the Jews.

As a well-schooled young woman, Becca of Wiserways knows exactly what her place should be: subservient and eager to please. Unlike the other women around her, however, she is driven to question the rough, often brutal way her people live. "You know so much," one of the stead wives tells her in consternation, "Why can't you know there's no changing things?"

Becca doesn't set out to become a

revolutionary. She wants to be good, to do the "right" thing - but her search for answers that make sense leads her farther and farther from holiness. Her mistake is not in her own moral judgment, but in expecting fairness from a system implicitly unfair.

Friesner's writing is powerful, as sure and strong as her narrator's voice. "A promise: That was all she was..." Becca came to realize. "A promise that spoke deep in a man, chafed his blood and urged him to be stronger, braver, more cunning than his brothers so that his seed and not theirs would root in every woman he could claim. And... the children who came after must surpass their sires. That was the holy law, immutable, that shaped the world. Stone on stone, lifetime on lifetime, each step upwards in turn like the progress of a maiden's dance, until the generations lifted themselves clear of the devil and came back at last to Paradise."

Friesner uses Becca's fierce search for justice as a touchstone to draw out the qualities of this sterile, angry world. This book is not a treatise on male-bashing. Friesner is aiming at something much deeper and more difficult: an examination of just how much people will surrender in exchange for security, and the manner in which religious doctrine is substituted for morality. The greatest villain here is thus, not gender, but the grim and inhuman theological tradition which divides the sexes, drains the spirit, and undermines the individual pursuit of knowledge and wisdom. - c. brusso

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The Best New Horror - ed Stephen Jones (1995) Carroll & Graf
 The Year's Best Fantasy and Horror eds Ellen Datlow & Terri Windling (1995) St. Martin's Griffin
 Borderlands 4 - eds Elizabeth & Th. Monteleone (1995) White Wolf

We normally don't ask much of the horror story, at least the contemporary horror story; most of the time we're grateful if the tale we're reading allows us to keep turning the page. Profundity of themes, multifaceted characters, complex symbolism; these we leave for serious fiction. With ghosts and goblins and things that go bump in the night we're willing to settle for a workmanlike narrative. And if a hackle or two is raised, so much the better.

Best New Horror, the sixth edition of this critically well-received series has more laudable goals aspiring as it does to disturb and have "us questioning ourselves and the world we live in." That it fails to do so is surprising given the big names - Bloch, Wagner, Ellison - Mr. Jones has chosen to aid him in his estimable endeavor. In fact, most of the works in this collection are rather dull and a number of them, thanks to their horrifyingly overwrought prose style, are virtually unreadable.

Take the vaunted Mr. Bloch's contribution. He takes great pains to develop this fascinating Indonesian vampire called a penanggalan then ties it to a nondescript story and saddles that with an utterly predictable ending. The much celebrated Harlan Ellison fares little better. His effort, "Sensible City" which, he tells us, was written on a cruise, is merely a rehashing of John Carpenter's **The Fog**. Which had little going for it in the first place. The bequest of the "Master," Karl Edward Wagner, is also shockingly bad. More the work of a flaneur than of a serious craftsman. Lesbianism, drug addiction, bat-like monsters from the id and self-consciously hip dialogue which wouldn't pass muster in a freshman writing class. And why is the unjustly lauded Kim Newman given sixty pages for a tedious farrago of sci-fi, Mexican historical romance and gruenoir? Ah yes, of course: he's the assistant editor.



Still, there are a couple of successful pieces. Lawrence Watt-Evans' "Dead Babies" is an amusing bit of EC-Comics styled fluff. Ian MacLeod's "The Dead Orchards" is a sick, poetic take on the fustian style of Lovecraft and Clark Ashton Smith. Elizabeth Massie's "Mosby Paulson" takes us into the mind of a dysfunctional adolescent and doesn't allow us to leave until she's finished with both Mosby and us.

And what of the stories that are supposed to have the reader questioning himself and the world he lives in? Well, Brian Hodge will have you asking if beauty is truly universal whether the sex of the lover matters. As well as whether morality is something that need concern the poet, the wordsmith hearing "the need in a bird that sings for a mate . . . the bland evil monotony in the machines of a factory." "To Receive Is Better," the most forgettable of this forgettable lot, is a surreal meditation of what it means to be human. And inhuman. Is it something missing that makes one or the other? Or something willfully subverted?

That's seven - a generous vouchsafing - out of twenty-two selections. Less than a .333 batting average. Great for a ballplayer but pretty damn poor for an editor with his pick of the small and not-so-small presses.

Ellen Datlow, the long-time fiction editor of **Omni** magazine, fares worse than Mr. Jones but apparently she believes she can make up for it with sheer volume. Her eighth shot at **The Year's Best Fantasy and Horror** has over fifty entries yet only a handful are worth talking about. Unlike Stephen Jones, Ms. Datlow has been allowed to leave no stone unturned in her search for the year's sterling efforts; but anyone who is able to slog his way through this tedious compendium will be forced to conclude that either Ms. Datlow has questionable taste or that the horror and fantasy field is in a terrible state.

Still, one could have predicted the volume would be rather uninvolved especially with so many major talents having failed



to make the final cut. Where is Ramsey Campbell, Clive Barker, Philip Nutman, Dennis Etchison and Joe Lansdale to name just a few? Why they've been passed over for such luminaries as Pagan Kennedy and Gregory Feeley. Which would matter not a wit if their labors produced something of value.

They did not. Like most of the tales in this anthology, Ms. Kennedy and Mr. Feeley's are tedious, silly and uneventful.

How can this be? Well Ms. Datlow is a post-modernist. She's not interested in narrative. Unless someone like Joyce Carol Oates is playing around with it. Or an Ian McDonald is making a mosh of Psycho jest for fun.

No, we don't want interesting "stories." That's recherche. We want mood, feminism, fractured fables, revisionist fairy tales. But above all, style. Never mind that most of the contributors have nothing to say. They have style.

Or at least the writers think they do. Of course, you and I know that a true original style is never achieved for its own sake. Effectiveness of assertion is the alpha and omega of style. A writer who has nothing to assert has no style and cannot be said to have one.

There are exceptions here. Stephen King gives us a wonderful little piece about a young boy running into the devil while fishing. It's a disarmingly simple gem, beautifully told, masterfully paced; it charms even when it frightens. Jack Ketchum's "The Box" is an unforgettable bit of existential horror concerning a man whose family loses interest in living after his young son's encounter with a stranger on a bus. Kafka move over. Steve Rasnic Tem graces us with one of his disquieting dreamscapes. "Giants In The Earth" asks the reader the unsettling question of whether proof of God's existence would make any difference and asks it in moving poetic fashion. The best bit of "fantasy" can be found in Nicholas Royle's "The Big Game" a marvelously jaded piece set in a futuristic England where violence is the order of the day, people play tennis on

HORROR cont.

top of fenceless skyscrapers and jetliners are shot down for sport.

There are a few, very few, other interesting contributions but they're not so good they'll have you running to the bookstore looking for other works by the respective authors. An exhaustive overview of developments in the field is provided by way of introduction but it given the questionable taste on display here the reader is advised to take the recommendations therein (**The Mask** as picture of the year, Tim Lucas' **Throat Sprockets** as breakthrough novel) with a healthy dose of salt.

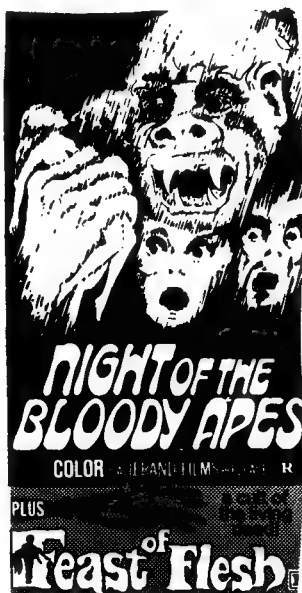
Readers who disdain traditional horror for the world of the truly bizarre however, will find much to enjoy in the very strange, the very surreal, and the very frightening fourth entry in the **Borderlands** anthology series. "No ghosts," promises the blurb on the back cover, "No maniacal slashers. Nothing that goes bump in the night." They're not kidding. In the literary world of the *Borderlands* there is only room for psychological horror, the more twisted and nightmarish, the better.

The twenty stories here range from a relatively safe *Twilight Zone*-ish vein to the wildly surreal. There's also a pleasant undertone of sick humor to spice things up. In "Misadventures in the Skin Trade," by Don D'Amassa for example, a man plots to recover his own skin from the thief he's sure has stolen it, leaving an inferior one in its place. "One in the A.M." by Rachel Drummond is a delightfully skewed piece about the monsters that might be hiding in our homes. Dirk Strasser's "Watching the Soldiers" is a haunting tale about the unseen horrors of war, while Peter Straub draws us inside the mind of a young boy trapped in a world full of human monsters in "Fee." And you'll never think of Christmas the same way again once you've read William Ellis' nasty little "The Long Holiday."

There are few weak efforts in this collection. Both Gerard Daniel Houarner's "Painted Faces" and "Dead Leaves," by James C. Dobbs, are heavy-handed and overlong, factors which combine to make them too predictable to be really interesting. "Monotone" by Lawrence Greenberg uses a choppy stream-of-consciousness point of

Immoral Tales: European Sex And Horror Movies 1956-1984 - Cathal Tohill & Pete Tombs (1995) St. Martin's Press

A fete for a bygone era. A time when trashy European directors had a few too many drinks, forgot they were talentless hacks, threw caution to the wind, and made the films they dreamed of making. Nasty films. Films with naked women. Doing unspeakable things. And having unspeakable things done to them. Made by men with names unknown to us. Strange names. Savage names. Jess Franco, Jean Rollin, Jose Larraz, Jose Benazeraf, Waleran Borowczyk and Alain Robbe-Grillet. Yes, the later is the celebrated writer. But allow me to beg your pardon and ask: Have you seen the cinematic work? The novels we know you have tried to read. And put down. The bland, the uneventful is difficult to embrace. No? Even in a French work of fiction.



view which gets a little out of control and undermines the effect of his story about a woman going insane. And, as is typical for an anthology of this type, even the stronger works are more effective if read only a few at a time; they lose their potency when taken in large measures.

Borderlands 4 is not for everyone. Fans of the splatterpunk school of horror won't find much to titillate them. For readers looking for catharsis in tales of twisted minds, however, this compilation makes perfect bedtime reading. - Salemi & Brusso

Forgive me, I digress. Where was I? Ah, yes. It was the best of times. It was the worst of times. It was the sixties. It was the seventies. It was Europe. And it was nowhere. There in the "no" there, the men with uncanny monikers pushed the envelope and unleashed their twisted libidos on an unsuspecting public. Educated, fastidious, soigne males schooled in the fantastique (erotic, erratic et annoying), surrealism, fin-de-siecle decadence and nascent Twentieth Century popular culture. Who, because they were working on a shoestring, didn't give a farthing about the public or their chances of commercial success. Well, maybe a bit. But not too much.

Yes, they got weird overseas with their horror and softcore sex during this period.. Mixing eros and thanatos in a bizarre way. And according to Tohill and Tombs, moviegoers ate it up. Hard to believe there was an audience for **Mill of the Stone Women and Prostitutes in Prison** but apparently there was. But I'm ready to believe anyone who chooses to describe the maker of **Le Viol du Vampire** like so:

"Watching a Rollin movie is like visiting a Gothic abbey or wandering round an ancient but well kept cemetery; after a while it begins to affect you suggesting all sorts of moods and emotions. . . . They look back to a romantic, doom laden past, filled with displaced vampires and uncanny beauty."



TALES cont.

Or has this to say about Jess Franco, a director of over one hundred films, none of which he is proud of:

"There's only one thing more important than the sexual undertow in a Franco film, and that thing is jazz. Franco's films move to a jazz beat. They ebb and flow to some crazy musical rhythm that only he seems to understand."

Forget about the fact that beat and rhythm are two different things and "jazz beat" itself is a meaningless phrase; what a wonderful way to discourse inchoately about a filmmaker whose films - for the most part - are devoid of meaning. And value.

The weirdness lasted until the mid seventies, the emergence and subsequent embrace of hardcore sex making the efforts of Franco et al. appear passe. The horror directors, however, refusing to throw in the towel, began to dump oodles and oodles of softcore sex into their genre exercises so as to compete with the clinically simian longeurs of travesties like **The Devil In Miss Jones** and **Deep Throat**. And when that strategy proved only partly successful, these audacious auteurs dispensed with vampires and monsters altogether and moved into sexploitation and pornography. Sexploitation and porno with oodles of horror and kinkiness that is.

This genre bending, is, the authors believe, the main reason the subject hasn't been covered properly. Tohill and Tombs corrective is to tackle both the sex and the horror films of the period through a detailed study of the work of six directors and in the process somehow make sense of the "whole thing." The problem with **Immoral Tales** however is that we're never sure what the "whole thing" is. Yes, of course the subject is sex and horror and how each genre mutated and influenced the other but because the author's take a haphazard, non-linear approach we're never quite able to see how or even whether this was so. **Tales** begins promisingly enough as a straight narrative, outlining and delineating the many influences brought to bear on the modern

Doing Rude Things: The History of the British Sex Film 1957-1981 - David McGillivray (1992) Sun Tavern Fields

A strange, usually comedic animal, almost entirely unknown to American audiences, the British sex film has been largely ignored even in its own country, and any cineaste attempting to research the evolution of this parochial genre is limited to reviews in the British Film Institute's **Monthly Film Bulletin** or odd copies of **Films & Filming**. Fortunately, sometime screenwriter (**House of Whipcord**) and movie journalist David



PAMELA GREEN

European horror film then, confusingly splatters into a scattershot look at the flowering of exploitation (or is that the fantastique or is that softcore or . . .) in England, Spain, Germany, Italy and France. A long coda follows. The heart of the matter. An examination of the major players. Interesting, fascinating; still, in the end we're left frantically scrambling through this excursus desperately attempting to piece everything together.

Taken as a loosely organized collection of essays taking as their subject the European exploitation - not sex, not horror - film, **Immoral Tales** is quite a diverting read. Try to make sense of it all, to soak it up in one sitting, and you'll wind up confused. And annoyed. For such a trashy subject, though, this will do just fine for now. Stack it next to your **Psychotronic Encyclopedia** and **Incredibly Strange Films Vol. I** and dip into it when the spirit moves you.

McGillivray has decided to finally put the record straight and **Doing Rude Things** is the end result. If this delightful, often witty book has one failing though, it is that it is a rather slim volume and ultimately leaves the reader wanting to know more.

The British sex film itself is, in part, to blame for this since it amounted to little more than a cottage industry catering to an initially small demographic, although ironically, by the genre's peak in the mid '70s, British skin flicks could be found playing in mainstream cinemas in every city. However, much documentation has disappeared, and many of the personalities involved are now dead. The fact these skin flicks became such a presence on the UK film scene is quite amazing but understandable; since hard core pornography is illegal in Great Britain, home grown softcore is the only game in town.

Like the rest of the Western world, the British nudie flick first emerged in the late '50s with **Nudist Paradise** (1957). Prior to this, all blue movies screened at private parties were smuggled into the country. Although production by local amateurs existed, it wasn't until the swinging sixties that a handful of professionals appeared and the British sex film developed its own identity, one which, within the limits of the Obscene Publications Act of 1959, was designed to tease and titillate. When compared to the bawdy oeuvre of Russ Meyer, the British skin flick seems a tame beast, and, often saddled with prurient, sub-Benny hill humor, very few of these films found a market outside their country of origin. Despite the outcries of the moral watchdogs who proclaimed these parades of boobs and bums as the decline of civilization, these celluloid skin fests drove the adult British populace to distraction and the box office successes of such embarrassing fare as **Confessions of a Window Cleaner** (1974) and its sequels kept what was left of the struggling British film industry alive for over a decade.

While McGillivray points out that the subjects of this book, even by bad movie standards, were so inept, so awful, they fail to achieve even the bargain basement appeal of **Plan Nine From Outer Space** or other golden turkeys, it is the social phenomena of the films themselves and the environment from which they sprang which makes the genre worthy of documentation.

RUDE cont.

The seeds were sown in the years immediately following the Second World War, when large numbers of young British males who had seen more explicit and daring movies during their National Service commissions overseas hungered for more than the average domestic crime drama showing at the local Odeon. Exhibitors, aware of this appetite, applied pressure to the restrictive British Board of Film Censors who introduced the 'X' rating (no one under 18 admitted) in 1951. Within months, every major city in Britain was screening 'X' rated movies from the continent, films like **Forbidden Women** and **The Fruits of Summer**, movies which previously would have been heavily censored to the point of absurdity or banned outright. The success of these pictures led inevitably to the importing of naturist films like **The Garden of Eden** (US, 1954). This particular movie stirred the imagination of the horny, repressed British male, and encouraged an independent producer, Nat Miller to make **Nudist Paradise**; the first home grown nudist flick, an insipid waste of celluloid which nevertheless grossed the then record-breaking sum of 19,000 pounds. Miller, didn't make any more nudist pictures; other producers jumped on the bandwagon, like American expatriates the Danziger Brothers, who rushed out **The Nudist Story** (1959). Miller, however, made other kinds of sexploitation flicks, sometimes dealing with taboo subjects like venereal disease and schoolgirl sex (**That Kind of Girl** (1961) and **The Yellow Teddy Bears** (1963), respectively).

By the early '60s, however, the British sex film began to evolve into the British sex farce, a trend started by the awful **Mary Had a Little** (1961), and exemplified by the long-running series of **Carry On** films, which, oddly were rated as family features ('A' rated; children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult) and rank as some of the few Brit sex lampoons to surface on these shores. Perhaps this turn, which McGillivray maintains was for the worse, was inevitable as some of the key players in the English softcore industry had backgrounds in vaudeville, and directors like Harrison Marks and Pete Walker (best known for his horror movies **The Flesh & Blood Show** (1972), **Frightmare** and **House of Whiplash** (both 1974)) each began as stand-up comedians.

In addition to Marks and Walker, both of whom were key figures in the field, another filmmaker who influenced the evolution of the genre was former photographer and cameraman-turned-producer/director Stanley Long. Starting out as a weddings and catalog merchandising lensman, Long was introduced to the sex business by a 15-year old school girl, Hilary Donaldson, who was the youngest jane ever to be hired by the risqué Windmill Theatre, a Soho establishment where showgirls posed in the nude. After photographing this cause celebre for the periodical **Weekend Mail**, there was to be no turning back. Donaldson's career as a Windmill girl lasted less than a year, but following her stage exploits, she became a model for "art studies." A typically British euphemism for nude photos, Donaldson asked Long to photograph her. The results of these shoots appeared in a tame girlie mag called **Photo Studio**, published by L. Miller and Son, the company responsible for distributing Marvel Comics in the UK. A shrewd businessman, Arnold Miller became partners with Long after the photographer informed him he'd been making short movies of his models undressing. Soon these shorts were advertised for mail order in **Photo Studio**, and Stag Films, the company the two men formed, became highly successful. Long made over one hundred of these 8mm shorts, and at one point Stag was producing over a thousand prints per day. These loops predominated the British market until the mid '60s. Like other low budget independent producers, Long and Miller went where the money was, nudist features, making such immediately salable fare as **Nudist Memories** (1959), **Nudes of the World** (1961), and the unforgettably titled **Take Off Your Clothes and Live** (1962), before switching gears to produce such **Mondo Cane** inspired shockumentaries like **London In The Raw** (1964) and **Primitive London** (1965).

By the mid-'60s, the general permissiveness that grew out of exploding youth culture and music forced the BBFC to lessen its censorship standards and the floodgates opened. European softcore proliferated on British screens, the titles changed to reflect the prurient interest of the guilty English: **Girl of Shame**, **Sins of Youth**, and the breakthrough **Sex Can Be Difficult** (the first time the word "sex" was freely allowed in a

title) proliferated. By this point Long and Miller dissolved their partnership, a decision which led to Long's involvement with a number of other, far more interesting movies (he film, uncredited, over a third of Roman Polanski's classic **Repulsion**, when Polanski fell behind schedule, losing original cinematographer Gilbert Taylor to prior commitments.)

Both Miller and Long were involved, as were a number of other sexploitation producers, with some of the most interesting British horror movies of the '60s and '70s. Miller co-produced both features directed by over-rated wunderkind Michael Reeves, **The Sorcerers** (1967) and **Witchfinder General** (1968), and the former was shot by Long. Another director who started out in horror movies became a regular Long collaborator: Michael Armstrong, director of the infamous **Mark of the Devil** (1970), wrote all three of Long's **Confessions Of rip-offs**, the **Adventures of series (... A Taxi Driver, ... A Private Eye, ... A Plumber's Mate** (1975-78 respectively)) in addition to **The Sex Thief** (1973) and **Eskimo Nell** (1974) both directed by Martin (Goldeneye) Campbell.

All this, of course, is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the wealth of information contained in this slender tome. Whilst McGillivray provides a detailed overview of the British sex film during its 25 year reign at the UK box office, some of his profiles of major figures like Harrison Marks (the Irving Klaw of England whose Betty Page was the luscious Pamela Green) and the late performer Mary Millington, who was hailed as the British Linda Lovelace, are unforgivably short and raise more questions than answers. Despite his claims that most of the movies mentioned are unwatchable (and McGillivray should know: as a critic he reviewed most of them), a detailed filmography with capsule reviews of the best and most interesting would have made this book a must-have. Still, **Doing Rude Things** is essential reading for all exploitation fans, and the good news is a US edition is scheduled for publication this spring. - Phil Nutman

Sex, Shocks & Sadism!
An A-Z Guide To Erotic Horror Films
on Video Cassette
Todd Tjersland
(Threat Theater International)(1995)

*Potential readers expecting another rehash of Michael Weldon's **The Psychotronic Encyclopedia** filed with the kind of reviews found in Craig Ledbetter's excellent **Euro Trash Cinema**, beware! Whilst a lot of the 355 movies critiqued in this magazine-sized book have been covered in those and many other publications, many of the weird wonders raved about with almost disturbing relish by author Tjersland have not. But are they erotic and do they qualify as horror films? Horrific, yes, erotic . . . well, that's up to the reader to decide, although many of the films reviewed here can only be described as "pornotronic."*

*For every movie like Ruggero Deodato's infamous **Cannibal Holocaust**, you'll find equal column inches devoted to junk like **Caligula Reincarnated As Hitler** (aka **Gestapo's Last Orgy**), but where Tjersland really scores is with his knowledge of totally sick and twisted Japanese S&M and bondage porn, clearly a genre much beloved by the author.*

*As an example, consider the review of **Captured Prisoner** (Japan, 1991): "Innocent young women are kidnapped off a deserted country road and forced to serve a fat hag and her sadistic dominatrixes as subjugated sex slaves in this entertaining production that spawned an even more disturbing sequel. The salves are kept in dog cages and are made to walk around on all fours like animals; they are whipped, beaten, raped and pissed on(!), then tortured! . . ." More disconcerting than Tjersland's enthusiastic tone is the fact movies like these rub shoulders in the book with passé mainstream fare like Ken Russell's **Crimes of Passion** and William Friedkin's **Cruising** (since when has the latter ever been described as an "erotic horror film?"; not even this reviewer's gay friends would ever call it that.)*

*Dipping into this encyclopedia of weird, twisted smut can be a daunting task. Reading about little-known Hong Kong product like **Daughter of Rape** or **Super Naked & Power Pussy** can be amusing and informative, but a quick glance at some of the 130 never-before-seen photos accompanying the text disrupts the author's tongue-in-cheek tone. If reading about some of the material wasn't bad enough, the illustrations (mainly reproductions of home made stills lifted from a video monitor) are often likely to make your hair curl as the hot wax guzzling from the aforementioned **Captured Prisoner** will attest.*

*Looking at the jetting enemas and pee-gulping high points of **Captured Prisoner 2** is not recommended before lunch. Other "highlights" guaranteed to make even the most jaded gorehound or pornophile pale include shots of a pregnant Japanese woman in bondage receiving cunnilingus (**Desire of Darkness**); a knife blade about to enter the spread vulva of a victim (**Mutilating The Virgin**); enforced anilingus (**Raping My Virgin Slave**); a backfiring enema overdose splashing a mad doctor's face and the following coprophilic 'lunch' (**Sweet Caress of Sadism**); and a definite lunch-loser, the insertion of a live salamander into the vagina of an imprisoned nun (**Tales of Naked Humiliation 2**, aka **Hunchback Sex Massacre** (we kid you not!)). According to the text, the crazed hunchback licks the salamanders clean after their removal . . .*

*It's not hard to recommend a book as bold and unflinching as this to the most devout fan of bizarre cinema, but for the average cineaste, well, giving this as a gift could test friendships. But the fact is this material exists, there is an audience for it, and therefore, Tjersland deserves commendation for documenting such extreme material. While this reviewer has no desire to see many of the films featured in its pages, **Sex, Shocks & Sadism** exerts an effect akin to rubbernecking at the scene of a fatal accident; no matter how hard you try, you can't look away. Besides, where else are you going to find a detailed review of the (surprise, surprise) German-made **Grampa Is A Sex Freak, Granny Likes To Watch** or **The Best of S&M Incest**?*

For serious devotees of taboo cinema only - and be warned, Volume 2 is on it's way! - Jerry Cornelius





When it rains, it pours. Ozzy's been off on a tear lately. And he's been tearing it up. The pussy, that is. Probably met the next Ms. Fide in the process. So that means this will probably be the last advice to the lovelorn column he'll be writing for a while. Maybe ever. So I'll leave with a few hard-earned bits of wisdom.

First off, if you drink, don't even think about dating a reformed alcoholic. Oh, they'll tell you they haven't a worry in the world. "Drink all you want," they'll tell you.

Don't you believe it. There's but a single reality for these creatures from hell and that's STRAIGHT. Which means: No drinking, no drugs, and no talking about it. Forget bowling

or poker nights with the boys. Or even thinking about going to a club. If John Lennon was to come back from the dead, reunite with the rest of the Beatles, and personally gave you tickets to the performance, you'd still have to stay home. Unless your reformed, significant other, got it in fucking writing the only beverage that was going to be served, aside from soft drinks, was Sharps.

Here's a typical exchange with one of the alcoholics I've gone out with during my incredible run:

Alcoholic: So what are you having to drink?

Me: Ah, I don't know. Thought I'd have a Rock before Rancid comes on.

Alcoholic: That's a beer isn't it?

Me: Yes. Yes it is. So what?

Alcoholic: Well . . . it's a beer.

Me: Yes. And me Tarzan and you Jane. You're upset, why? It's just one beer.

Alcoholic: That's the point. It's a beer.

Me: Don't they teach you in that twelve step program of yours to live and let live? You can't handle alcohol. Okay; I can. No arrests for DWI, a successful career, a nice personality. I can handle alcohol. We've talked about this ad infinitum already. And it is only a single, I repeat, single beer.

Alcoholic: Yes, but I'd just like to see you sober for once.

Me: I'm sober now. I've been sober all day. I'll be sober after this beer!

Alcoholic: No. You've never been sober. You'll never be sober. You're an addictive personality and in reality you'll always be drunk. The sick need for alcohol. The joy it brings. The release. The freedom. The creative impetus. I know. I was once, I mean life was a feast at which all hearts were open. I had to close it. And why? Because I liked to drink.



You. You are evil. Bland is good. Boring is the state of true being . . . OMMMMMMM . . .

Yes, my friends, these people are freaks. Freaks of nature. Substituting one addiction for another. Twelve steps leading to nowhere. Avoid them like the plague. Unless you want to live in a leaden fantasy world of uneventualities with a feverish selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making her happy.

Often alcoholics seek refuge in political activism. Nothing wrong with that. If you don't mind wiling away the hours in hospices or in front of the White House protesting the latest Presidential press conference. Literature, art, beauty (and beer) have no place in the Ghandiesque reality of a woman suffering from a messianic complex. I

know. I live in Washington. Home to banner-carriers of all stripes. Here's what a dialogue with a typical straight-edged protestnik sounds like:

Me: So you want to go to see Rancid at the Capitol Ballroom?

Alcoholic: I can't. I have to paint placards for Monday's rally.

Me: What rally?

Alcoholic: The hang-on Hillary rally.

Me: Do you think that's really going to help? I mean forget about the guilt or innocence issue. Isn't she just a smoke screen for Clinton?

Alcoholic: Spoken like a true male chauvinist.

It's not important whether she's guilty or innocent. She's a woman trying to play by man's rules and she's being punished for that. So she needs our support. And yours too if you weren't so preoccupied with your penis.

Me: Alright, drop it. What about next week? Would you like to go out to dinner?

Alcoholic: Maybe, if I can get away. But no meat!

Me: Well, why? What's up?

Alcoholic: We're having a meeting of the Almost-Supporters of O.J. group.

Me: "Almost" what?

Alcoholic: It's a black woman's support organization. They think O.J.'s guilty but as Afro-Americans they feel they have to, in order to promote the bettering of their brothers and sisters, pretend he isn't.

This causes great guilt. An almost hebephrenic reaction. Quite destructive.

Me: So if he had killed a black woman, they wouldn't have to pretend? Why should the color matter? A killer's a killer.

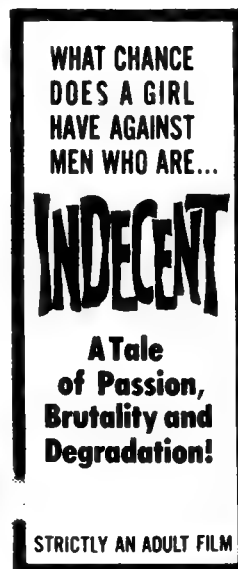
Alcoholic: That's the typical white racist male chauvinist talking. My God, it's so much worse than I thought. Must you always talk through your priapism? Sometimes I think Laurena had the right idea.

Me: Laurena who?

Alcoholic: Bobbit!

Me: Jesus! Are you telling me you'd like to castrate me? Isn't that a little extreme?

Alcoholic: In the face of male hegemony extreme is sometimes the



order of the day. God!
You're so dense. Such a
typical male. You're a
wonder. A true dinosaur.

Me: (Aside) It's a
wonder you could bring
yourself to suck my dick
you fucking loony!

Then,
there's
the
recoverin
g drinker
who's
looking
for a
project.
My
friends,
don't let
it be
you. No
matter
how good
looking
she is,
run.
Away.
For the
hills.
Unless
you want
to go through scenarios
like the following:

Alcoholic: You look
nice. But wait. Hold on
a second.

Me: What are you doing?
Putting spit on my
eyebrows?

Alcoholic: Just hold on.
I want them to lay flat.
They stand up a bit. You
look, I mean, you could
look better. Just stand
still.



Me: My eyebrows aren't
even an eighth of an inch
long. Who cares?

Alcoholic: They stand up
and it irritates me. You
don't want people to
laugh at you, do you?

Me: Jesus! Now my
eyebrows are wet. It
looks like I put
Brylcreem on them.

Alcoholic: Stop
exaggerating. You look
much better now.

Me: Alright. Alright.
Can we go now. We're
going to be late.

Alcoholic: Yes. Fine.
Hold on. Wait. You're
not going to wear that
tee with those jeans?

Me: What? What? A
white tee with black
jeans and a leather
jacket? What's wrong
with that? We're going
to see Rancid. A punk
band. What am I
supposed to wear? A top
hat and tails. Anyway I
always dress like this.
I dressed like this when
you met me. I dressed
like this before you met
me. I've always dressed
like this. And I will
always dress like this.

Alcoholic: Well, yes.
But you can see your
chest hairs through the
shirt. It looks so . . .
I don't know. So rude.

Me: I'm a man. Men have
hair on their chests.

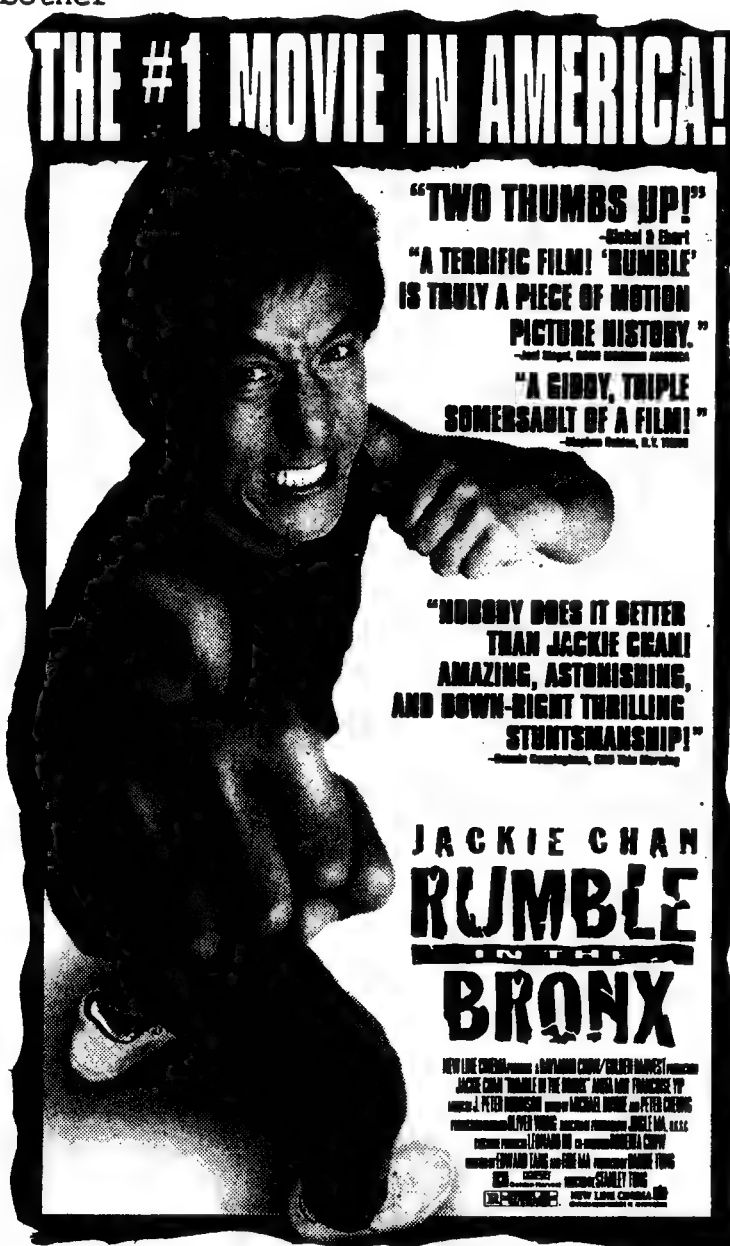
And you have to look really close to see the hair. Real close. As in close enough to be my girlfriend.

Alcoholic: Well, maybe if you just let me wet the hairs down a little. Now hold on . . . Just lift your shirt up a minute . . .

Yes, it's a crazy mixed-up, shook-up world out there. Doesn't bother

me. Why? Because I drink and I don't give a shit about politics or my hair. You shouldn't either. Life is too short. And you're not Ghandi. Or William Powell. If you were, you wouldn't be holding Brutarian in your trembling hands. There's something wonderful about the planet being as fucked up as it is. Let me quote the late, great Orson Welles: "In Italy

for thirty years under the Borgias they had warfare, terror, murder, bloodshed. But they produced Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci and the Renaissance. In Switzerland they had brotherly love. They had five hundred years of democracy and peace. And what did they produce? The cuckoo clock." . . . Read on, what follows is important.



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IN THE BRONX

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From Dusk Till Dawn
(d) Robert Rodriguez

Uh huh. Uh huh. Ozzy saw it coming. You saw it coming. Those obnoxious, overbearing, egg-sucking dogs otherwise known as film critics just couldn't wait to jump all over Quentin Tarantino and this unassuming multi-million dollar gussied up drive-in movie provided the perfect opportunity. Sure it ain't Pulp Fiction. Or Reservoir Dogs. So what? Lady From Shanghai wasn't Citizen Kane but it was still a masterpiece. Which Dusk ain't. But it's supposed to be a piece of crap. A throwback to another era. When you drove to a movie and all you asked for between the nookie were the three Bs: beasts, blood and boobs. All three of which, in this tale of two criminals on the lam taking a family hostage so as to get across the border into Mexico, you get in abundance. Okay, the script doesn't have much going for it in the way of dialogue. But George Clooney and Tarantino as the sickos on the run are hilarious, Harvey Keitel as the preacher who's lost his faith is appropriately hammy, Juliette Lewis as his virginal daughter sublimely lubricious and the whole mess has them all winding up in this surreal truck stop strip bar run by vampire barker Cheech Marin and thousands of his blood drinking friends. Yes, it's as ridiculous as it sounds. That's the point, stupid. Why else would Fred Williamson and Tom Savani get major speaking parts? This an homage and absurdist take on pure exploitation. As for getting. Mr. Fide's advice is to get drunk, get a piece of your woman (or man), then go see this atavistic piece of cinema. And don't forget the beer.



Rumble In The Bronx
(d) Stanley Tong

Jackie Chan. Need I say more? Sweets with sweets war not, joy delights in joy. Do not bend with the removers to remove. The tale be slight, the manner mannered, the characters caricature, I sayest a pox on thee for looking with such critical eye. Go and celebrate with thine fellows the Baryshnikov of the Bs. Sophomoric jesting. Cartoon violence. Balletic fisticuffs. Rube Goldberg contraptions. Stunting beyond compare. And question not. Dost thou ask why the Coyote pursue the Roadrunner? Nay! Then do not ask why thou must attend to Jackie. Reason not the reason. The incomparable Chan is never out of season.



Broken Arrow
(d) John Woo

John Travolta is an Air Force pilot indignant about having been repeatedly passed over for promotion to Colonel. So one fine night, whilst on a training mission, he shanghais a B-3 loaded with two nuclear devices. One problem, despite all the careful planning, Travolta fails to ace his co-pilot, Christian Slater, choosing instead to foolishly eject him after cuffing Christian around a little. Slater survives, finds the cutest park ranger in history (Samantha Mathis), and with her in tow, sets off to stop crazy Johnnie. Despite the fact Travolta has Howie Long, a dozen or so Navy Seals and more hardware than the United Nations Bosnian task force. Me? I would have pitched a pup tent in the desert with the curvaceous Samantha.

After all, Johnnie only wants to blow up Denver. Denver! It's not like we're talking Paris or New York here. Anyway, this moronic movie coulda been a six-pack classic if the formulaic script hadn't forced Woo to destroy the pacing and suspense by needlessly interjecting countless scenes of sweating Pentagon officials and nervous field commanders. What Arrow has going for it though is inventive explosions, marvelous special effects, nicely choreographed fistic and gunfight scenes and an effortlessly brilliant performance by the former Vinnie Barbarino. So brilliant in fact, you'll find yourself rooting for him to take out the rather pallid Slater and the robotic Mathis long before the flick's predictable - though expertly filmed - denouement.



Hellraiser 4 (d) Alan Smithee

Ozzy had no expectations for this one. Not with all the production delays. And first time director and fx maven Kevin Yagher begging to have his name removed from the credits after watching the final cut. The Alan Smithee moniker you see above the title is the Directors Guild way of protecting the innocent. Good move Kevin, as this stillborn atrocity is such a disaster it makes the Leprechaun series look like a Val Lewton production by comparison. In this, hopefully final installment we have Pinhead and company storming a spaceship in an attempt to open a wider door between Hell and Earth. For what reason, I have no idea, as Mr. P has never had much of a problem in moving himself or any of his friends out of the Infernal Regions any time he pleases. Speaking of ideas there aren't too many here.

Nor is there much of a story. The screenwriters try to flesh out their meager narrative by tacking on two tales - one set in 18th Century Paris which explains the origin of the little box, the other set in the present day which makes no sense and bears little relation to anything - but it all smacks of desperation. And stupidity. Avoid at all costs.

Fargo (d) Joel Coen

"I don't get it," Francis McDormand playing the character of an ingenuous Minnesota sheriff tracking a pair of kidnapper-killers says near the end of Fargo. And you, like Ozzy, will most likely find yourself agreeing with Francis should you have the misfortune to be dragged to this soulless and dramatically moribund flick about the complications which ensue after a feckless car salesman hires two morons (one of whom is Steve Buscemi) to kidnap his rich wife. The Coen (Raising Arizona, Barton Fink, Blood Simple) Brothers haven't so much made a movie as an in-joke; the punchline of which is apparently, that there is exposed film but no "film" to speak of. Get it? Pretty funny, eh? Gosh, what a brilliant conceit. How Antonnionish!



University film professors and dilettantish coffee-house types will more than likely read something metaphysical in all this banality and view the patronizing attitude of Les Coens as a profound gesture of comic despair. The rest of you, the sensible ones, will feel by turns, insulted, bored and angry by the disdainful japey of such hollow men.

Executive Decision (d) Stuart Baird

What a rip-off. the advertisers would have you believe this is some kind of oddball pairing of pretty boy Kurt Russell, and non-actor tough Steven Seagal but it ain't. Seagal is blown out of an experimental jet in the first half hour leaving think tank operator and erstwhile transvestite John Leguizamo to tackle the mess created by a sweaty group of Arab terrorists attempting to run a commercial flight they have turned into a

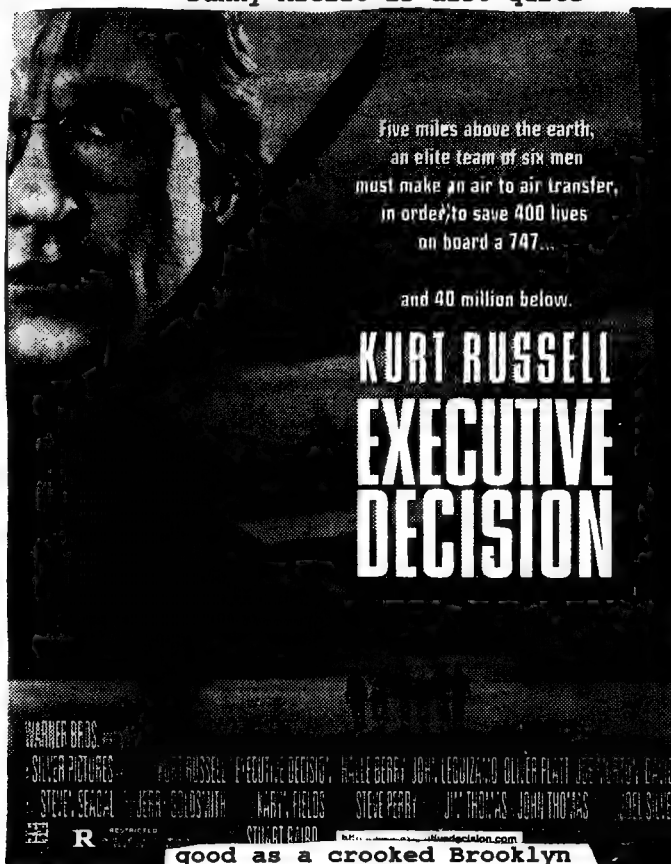
virtual hydrogen bomb into the eastern seaboard. If you can get over Seagal as bait to lure you into the theater though you're not gonna have too bad a time with this silly little techno-thriller. Especially when it takes so many pot shots at the Arabs who, by the way, have been inundating Warner Brothers' offices with letters of protest. I say, remove Salmon Rushdie's death sentence

and maybe you towel heads and you have a legitimate gripe.

City Hall (d) H. Becker



Little better than your standard television movie of the week, City Hall squanders a fine performance by Al Pacino in the role of a charismatic New York mayor brought down by the corruption within his administration. Danny Aiello is also quite



good as a crooked Brooklyn borough chief, but the supporting cast, especially Jon Cusack and Bridget Fonda, are hopelessly ineffectual. Cusack's James Carville impression is laughable though (the Ferraday, Louisiana accent comes and goes for no discernible reason) and it does allow you to forget what a pedestrian actor he is. Most of the time. Fonda's robotics however make it impossible to forget that talentlessness like madness - her father is Peter Fonda - is inheritable.

Chungking Express (d) Wong Kar-Wai

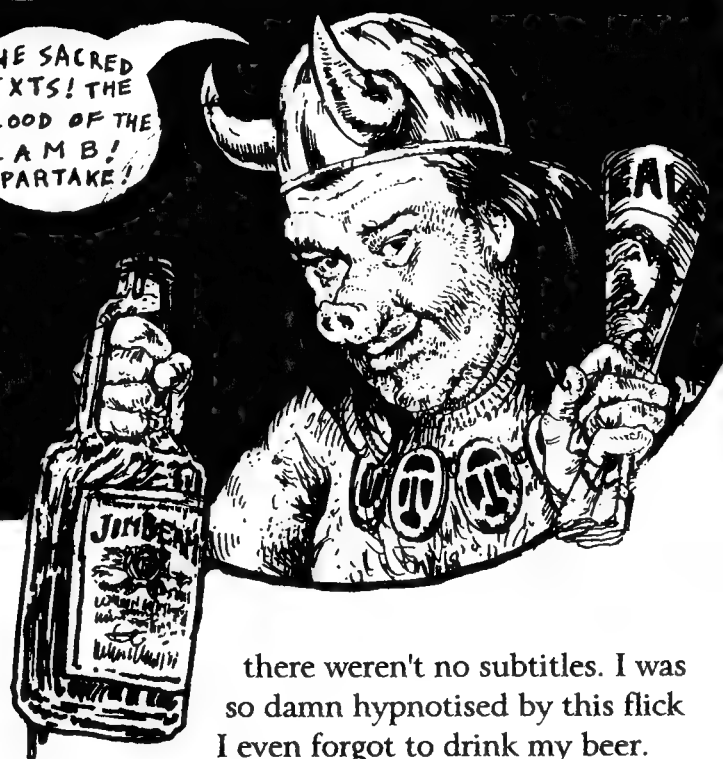
Attempting to prove there are Hong Kong movies for the art-house market, Quentin Tarantino imports this cloying, vacuous brummagem and dumps it into badly built Tory cinemas across the country. John Woo fans are hereby put on notice: there's very little action in this soporific flick. Champagne and strawberry types take heed: tank up on the Moët before attending. Unless your idea of a good time is watching Orientals eating unappetizing fried food whilst talking endlessly about failed romance. The catch-as-catch can story begins with a cop named He Qiwu mooning over a lost love named May. A few nights later, in the middle of a drinking binge He (he) meets Brigitte, a hot platinum-wigged, shade-wearing drug smuggler. Brigitte is in no mood for sex but having just shot it out with some rival dealers she needs a place to hole up. So she lets He (he) take her to a hotel. Nothing happens. Not just in the hotel but with this story. Director Kar-Wai arbitrarily decides to begin another tale involving another cop (Tony Leung) and his broken affair with a counter girl who is hopelessly in love with him (not he). This is known as parallelism in the literary trade. Ozzy calls it misdirection: if you have nowhere to go with one narrative, switch to another and hope no one notices. Mr. Fide did and thus ended up parallel with the floor. Asleep. Dreaming of Dan Dan noodles and spring rolls.



ONIAN JR

THE BRUTARIAN

THE SACRED
TEXTS! THE
BLOOD OF THE
LAMB!
PARTAKE!



It was a couple of days after I watched all those sicko tapes I believe led to Pa accidentally killin' hisself when his auto-erotic game got outta hand, so to speak, and his belt done slipped a notch. I was still drinkin' up a storm an' had watched every tape in my Nina Hartley collection when I found another box of movies in the root cellar while I was lookin' for the last crate of beer.

The box was unopened an' had been mailed to Pa just before his screw up. There weren't a return address I could find but the post mark was Olympia, Washington, and the titles of these here tapes caught my imagination. Movies like *Super Naked & Power Pussy*, *Violence Jack 3: Evil Town*, and *Entrails of a Virgin*. Since none of 'em rang any bells with me, I decided it was time to find out what I'd been missing. As *Super Naked* (1992) had the oddest title that seemed a good place to start, and boy, was I right!

Ain't no question about it, this is the weirdest fuckin' movie I ever done seen, and that's sayin' somthin'. Tryin' to describe this flick is almost impossible 'cause it's in Japanese an'

there weren't no subtitles. I was so damn hypnotised by this flick I even forgot to drink my beer.

Imagine if those whacked out Monty Python guys decided to remake the '60's *Batman* TV show and set it in an Japanese all-girl school. Imagine, if you can, that this school is owned/run by a weird family led by some guy who dresses up as a jester and has a fat, robotic fascist retard as a sidekick. Okay, an' if that ain't weird enough, these 'lil cuties in their gray uniforms get tied to trees, are stripped and then flogged with a cat o' nine tails if they misbehave. Like if they don't bring the right text book to class. And all this is watched by an audience of glove puppets!

No, I swear to Jesus H. Christ in a jump suit that I ain't makin' this shit up, an' neither is it a delusion caused by all the drugs I've consumed over the years. But wait! There's more. We ain't even got to the best bit yet. Ya see, these girls have a protector, this chick who wears a red cape an' face mask with floppy Muppet ears, and red knee-high boots -- an' nothing else. An' she 'beats on the bad guys with nunchucks,



an' (this is the best part) she has super powers. She levitates with her legs spread wide and her pussy glows! It blinds/transfixes the bad guys an' then she lands on their faces an' they die happy!

I'm not even goin' to try to explain the plot of this thing (I mean, you think I can speak Jap?), but I was so damn astounded by this flick once the end credits rolled I jumped on the phone an' called my buddy Filthy Phil in Atlanta, who knows all about weird stuff an' likes ta think of himself as a cineaste, but that's just pretentious shit. He's a sleaze merchant like you an' me.

Of course, he knew about this *Super Naked* flick. It turns out it's the third installment in a series an' is based on a comic book or animated show created by the same guy who did *Devilman*. Power Pussy's real title is *Kekko Kamen*, which Filthy Phil tells me kinda translates as 'Okay Masked Girl.'

No, don't make no sense to me, neither.

Now we just have ta find the other flicks -- I'm sold. I wanna be president of the Super Nekkid fan club. An' you'll wanna join too after you see this thing. I can't recommend this tape highly enough. Filthy also informed me there's a subtitled version available from those nice folks at Video Search of Miami, so I guess I'm gonna have to get it an' find out what the fuck is going on in this crazy bastard of a movie.

Hell, I even watched it a second time.

By this point I was in tears an' my throat was givin' out from laughin' so loud so I finally downed a beer in one gulp. My passion for life had

returned an' not even the snow fallin' outside the window could keep me from bein' blue the ways I had since buryin' Pa. Openin' a second brew, I popped in another tape -- *Violence Jack 3* -- an' hit pay dirt again, although it was animated an' Japanese an' there still weren't no subtitles.

This one seemed to be a bit easier to figure out. Seems some apocalyptic shit happened to this major Jap city an' the survivors went underground. They kinda live peacefully, even though there's this gang of punk psycho-bikers led by this huge ugly guy, Big Sulus, who likes eatin' cockroaches an' has this *Clockwork Orange*-style transsexual bitch as his main squeeze. Anyway, during an excavation in the ruins, some hapless slobs unearth Violence Jack, who's this nine-foot tall, monosyllabic brute. At the same time the digging unleashes a demonic spirit which possesses several of the ruined city's inhabitants and leads to an orgy of rape and violence which is pretty un-fuckin'-believable for an animated feature. When Violence Jack gets going you won't believe your eyes! People get ripped in half crotch-first, there are decapitations galore, and bloody fight scenes that will make you levitate off the couch, particularly the final showdown between Violence Jack and Big Sulus. The hardcore sex scenes are digitally censored but you can still see enough of large cartoon cocks rammin' in and out of cell animated slits, but since that does nothin' for me, I didn't care.

Next I opted for *Entrails of a Virgin*. There's only so many animated cocks and cunts a boy can take in a day, an' I wanted to see the real thing. Hell, I wanted something else like *Super*

Naked, but what I got was one of the most outrageous Jap horror movies I've ever eyeballed. This baby had me so hypnotized I couldn't even hit the pause button to get up an' go get another beer. See a woman masturbate with a severed hand! (after she straightens out the fingers, of course!) See a demon rapist with a dong the size of a donkey fuck women to death! Watch the demon rapist kill men with and axe! See him hit a guy on the forehead with such force the victim's eyeball shoots out its socket to splat on the ground!

No subtitles, no dubbing, but who cared. I was gettin' used to all this Jap-speak echoinn' around the den. The story, such as it is, features a bunch a sleazy T&A 'fashion' photographers and their underwear-clad nubile models who spend a night in a hunted house, though why, I have no idea, an' the demon who lives there kills them all. Long, boring scenes are punctuated by lots of steamy sex and kink: panty pissing, wrestling in underwear, blow jobs 'climaxing' in cum-spitting, and silhouetted shots of the demon's huge dong plungin' into the pussies of his female victims. Finally, this monster fucks the only virgin among the group and there's even an inner body shot of his supernatural seed impregnatin' her womb. By this point my head was spinnin' like Linda Blair's.

What is it with the Japs? These flicks made Joel Reed's infamous *Bloodsucking Freaks* and any number of Italian zombie gut-crunching cannibal flicks look like they belong on the Disney Channel. I mean, did we

completely fuck them up when we dropped those big ole atom bombs, or what?

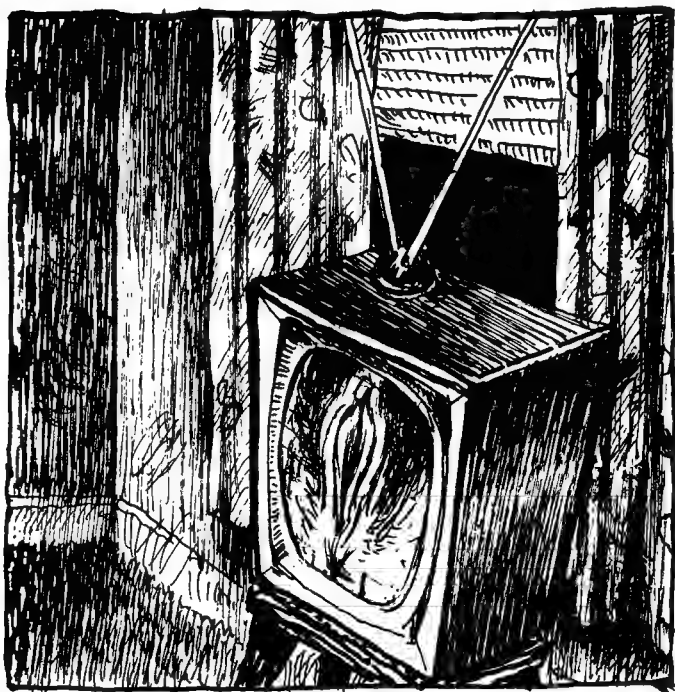
After all this non-subtitled, undubbed fare it was time to watch a movie with a plot and subtitles so I knew what the hell was going on. My choice was *XX: Beautiful Victims*, a



suspenseful, well-made Japanese police procedural/serial killer flick that you can get from Video Search of Miami, and comes highly recommended if you have a strong stomach an' can handle scenes of brutal sexual violence.

A sicko killer is stalkin' the streets of a city an' the police are baffled. Unlike the good ole US of A where bizarre sex crimes are passe, the slant cops have no understandin' of what makes this guy tick. His preferred manner of murder is to crucify his victims naked, tying them with piano

wire around the throat, then videotape them as he rapes, then kills them with a chisel. The heroine of this flick is a woman forensic pathologist, Dr. Mizuki, and we get to see some of the most stomach-churnin', authentic-looking autopsy footage this side of an SPK video.



The movie really takes off when the killer slaughters a hooker, whose pimp is a diminutive, orange-haired, butch biker/punk dyke called Natsumi. This chick is a ball of energy an' enlivens every scene she's in. When she overhears Dr. Mizuki tell a cop, "for her age her vagina was unusually stretched...maybe she was a prostitute," Natsumi goes nuts and kicks the shit out of the pigs, an' is subsequently arrested. Turns out the victim was her lover.

The killer starts stalkin' the good

Dr. an' breaks into her apartment when she's asleep an' inflicts a kinky bondage/ attempted rape scenario on the doc, but before he can pork her brains out he's interrupted by an unexpected visit by Natsumi, which leads to one of the best lines of dialogue I've read in a while. Natsumi to Mizuki: "So, lady Dr. with the non-stretch vagina, how does it feel? Prostitute or police, the pain is the same." One for the movie quotables, folks!

Mizuki, her own strange sexual yearnings awakened, goes undercover to catch the killer with Natsumi's assistance. A lesbian relationship between the two develops and gives rise (ho-ho!) so some great, weasel-greasing girl-girl footage before the movie reaches its inevitable climax.

Like I said, highly recommended, but make certain you haven't eaten before this watchin' this flick. The scene where Dr. Mizuki removes a used condom from the throat of a victim isn't something you're likely to forget.

(*Super Naked*, *Violence Jack 3*, and *Entrails of a Virgin* are available from Threat Theater International, PO Box 7633, Olympia, WA 98507-7633; *XX:Beautiful Victims* can be obtained from Video Search of Miami)

Yip, daddy was an alcoholic and a whore chaser. He done told me though, it was only because he couldn't meet somebody like Mamie Van Doren. "You can keep youm Mansfields and Monroes" he used to say. "Mamie's got it all. An in a smaller package. Man likes to be

aroused without bein' intimidated by a mountain a flesh. Want to be able to get you hands 'round a gal. Ain't no gettin' 'round someone like Marilyn or Jane." *The Beat Generation* was one a his favorites. Mamie ain't in it much. But she runs all over the place in tight hip-huggers and skinny blouses. Poutin' and screamin'. Daddy bein' as sick as he was probably also 'joyed it 'cause it had this rich spoilt brat charmin' his way into houses and rapin' purty women. The police, played by Steve Cochran and Uncle Fester (whose wife is damn hot red-headed Irish McCala), are so stupid they even let one of their wifes get porked by this sexually dysfunctional character. Whilst Coogan and Cochran are scratchin' their heads and Cochran is worryin' whether his wife is carryin' his baby or the Aspirin Kid's (the name they give the sexual bandit) we's treated to slices of beat bohemia with Vampira readin' poetry, Louie Armstrong playin' sax, and a cast of failures like Robert Mitchum and Charlie Chaplin's young 'un spoutin' jive and snappin' they fingers. Crazy man! (Video Search of Miami)

Still, not as crazy as *Blast of Silence*. A movie with a title like this - guess it's what you'd call an axy-moron -well, you kind of expect it'd be like nothin' you ever done seen. And it is. You all got this Robert De Niro look-a-like contract killer named Frankie Boy Bono trackin' down this second rate Mob boss through the streets of the Lower East Side and while he's doin' it he comes to have certain realizations of hisself. Like he's a loser goin' nowhere.

Tries to rekindle a romance with an old flame, make nice at parties, get in the spirit of Christmas; but it's a no go. Whoever it was that made this flick has a real feel for filth. I live in a shotgun shack and I had to get out the ole wooden tub and take me a bath after this un. Voice over third party narration had me splittin' a gut at it's attempt to be film noir poetic and only achievin' a Lionel Stander does Kerouac kind of thing ("Your hands are hot Frankie boy but that's all right." "He had a moustache to disguise the fact that he had the lips of a woman.") but nevertheless it only added to the disgust I had at the whole proceedin's. That's a compliment. I can't wait to Blast of again when I'm sober. Course whenever that might be only Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior knows. (Video Search of Miami)



YES, AS A MATTER OF FACT, HE HAS HIS DICK UP MY ASS RIGHT NOW. I CAN HARDLY WAIT FOR HIM TO PULL OUT SO I CAN LICK ALL THE SHIT OFF.

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Guest Stars CATHY CROSBY · RAY ANTHONY · DICK CONTINO · IN CINEMASCOPE

Written by RICHARD MATHESON and LEWIS MELTZER • Directed by CHARLES HAAS

In this trade magazine advertisement for The Beat Generation, producer Albert Zugsmith ballyhooed the fact that "beatniks" were in, and, as usual, Zugsmith declared that he was first with their story.



Audio Depravation



dirk fubar [dt]
steve jeffries [sj]

craig regala [cr]
dom salemi [ds]



Les Baxter

The Lost Episodes

It's so hip to like this space age bachelor pad shit these days that someone has to put a stop to it. We volunteer. Les Baxter is ca ca compared to fellow exotica peddlers Martin Denny and Arthur Lyman. Even if Les came first. Hell, Bill Haley came before Elvis. So? So what, right? And so what about this cliché easy listening muzak tweaked with theremin, bird calls and a few dashes of sirenesque choruses. Throw in schlockmeister Baxter's trademark overuse of saccharine strings and soothing rhythms and you reduce the whole shebang to a fitfully interesting musical joke. Sort of like Lawrence Welk on acid. Or almost any *I Love Lucy* episode. Ersatz hip for closet homosexuals. (Chartruse Records) ds

Ape Hangers

Ultrasounds

The Ape Hangers mix punk thrash with pop hooks straight out of the late '70s. Sure, *Ultrasounds* is a blatant throwback to a long-gone time when your humble reviewer had a full head of hair. And a few songs overstay their welcome. But it's consistently likeable nonetheless. The Apes are similar to Urge Underwhelm, but without the phony hipster posing and with better songs. Having the Ramones' uncredited lead guitarist, Ed Stasium, as a guest on "Over My Head" is a coup for the knowing. (A&M) df

Big Bad Johns

Plymouth Rock

Yes, but what kind of Plymouth? And is it an excuse or a justification for listening to rockabilly con roots by way of Connecticut? Hard to say, but this is a million miles better than Stray Cats' strut. Alright, that ain't saying much. So let me say this. The singer ain't half bad. He bristles with conviction when the melodies get fairly tuneful. Which is quite often. And the guitar stings and buzzes more often than that. So I suppose you're gonna pick up the new Ronnie Dawson disc before this. Maybe you shouldn't. Ronnie's about eighty now. These guys are a wee bit younger. Probably a lot more energetic too. (Feralette Records, 306 West Fourth Street, NY, NY 10014) ds

The Boo Radleys

Wake Up!

The Boo Radleys' mix of Beatles-derived British pop and American R&B mines the same shaft that the Jam and Squeeze did 15 years ago, but with an occasional overtly gay lyrical reference. Guitarist/songwriter Martin Carr has a knack for hooks, and vocalist Sice is a dead ringer for Glenn Tilbrook. This self-produced album exudes thoughtful and purposeful studio savvy. They're not the equal of their aforementioned predecessors. And their sound is somewhat passe at the moment. But they're surely not England's most annoying export. (Creation/Columbia) df



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Never liked hardcore. Too fast. Not much in the way of melody either. LA punk? Don't make me laugh. Too fast. Not much in the way of melody either. So what to do with this collection of 28 Los Angeles punk and hardcore bands? Right! Make judicious use of the programming button. Why am I telling you this? Because about a quarter, maybe half (what's 13 out of 28?) of this is fabulous: the four shiny, bratty Red Kross songs; the devil-may-care covers of War, Alice Cooper and Creedence Clearwater; and the revelatory cuts by something called RF7. There were one or two other things that had me picking up the jewel case instead of the shot glass but I don't remember what they were. Mescal sometimes has that effect. (Bomp) ds

Caustic Resin

Fly Me to the Moon

A band asks a lot of a listener when it puts more than 70 minutes of new material on one album. Few combos can sustain interest for that long, and fewer still should even try. Caustic Resin is not one of the few, but they tried anyway, the fools. Their neo-psychedelic guitar sludge is heavy on badly played slide guitar and clumsy rhythms. They never quite rock, and they surely don't rule. Their songs ain't much and tend to ramble. They even reduce Brian Eno's "Golden Hours" to a Vanilla Fudge plod. Their decision to let this dreck continue for 16 songs and 74 minutes is sheer self-indulgence. Life's too short to sit through this shit twice. (Pretentious Recordings) df

Bush Tetras

Room In The Night

For a time, in the early eighties, these three viragos were the toast of New York. Without the benefit of an lp. A metronomic funk 45 called "Too Many Creeps" was all it took. Soon legions of arty Lower East Siders were pouring into the local clubs to see the bitches shake it up. But after three years the vixens called it quits and the Manhattan world within-yet-outside-the-world turned to more important things. Like Trivial Pursuit, Thai food, auto-erotic asphyxiation and Keith Herring. Outraged at time having obscured the Tetra's legacy, Roir has slapped together all the singles, eps and detritus onto one tinnsey-winsey disc. And a truly wonderful disc it is indeed. Hostile girl-you'll-be-a-woman-soon voidoid phunk concocted of equal parts angular rhythms, oft-kilter melodies, gurgly, dissonant guitar work, pouty pms vocalizing and the odd industrial noise or two. Held together with the taut, sinuous, lubricious and imaginative bass attack of one Laura Kennedy. The slower pieces - bitchy, cum-hither complaints as far as I could tell - are also quite effective. Essential listening. Even if you don't like janes. (ROIR) ds

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James Chance & The Contortions

Lost Chance

White boy wanting to do/be James Brown and whoever it was playing sax (Maceo Parker?) whilst refusing to recognize that at the heart of this greasy FUNK was heart, soul and a childish delight in the inane. Is this humanely possible? No, but Mr. Chance pretended it was, and therein lies the rub. And the comedy. Tortured ruminations over the futility of existence (it's in the performance not the words) gathered o'er hip shaking sounds begging please please please for you to get on the good foot. Yes man, yes! Listen to this divine idiot bray over hot hot grooves and then take off like there's no tomorrow on something sounding vaguely like a saxophone. Flights to nowhere and everywhere. Sweet agonized oblivion. I can't stand it. Gives me hot pants. Makes me feel like a sex machine. Or some kind of avenging disco godfather. (ROIR) ds

Children of the Bong

Sirius Sounds

Boys, Tangerine Dream did a lot of drugs, although I'm reasonably certain marijuana wasn't one of them. At least when they sat down to compose. LSD downed with cough syrup maybe. But not mary jane. So get off the bong and stop with the tinkertoy psychedelic synth dance muzak for retards. Alright, 8 year olds. What's the fucking difference? And shifting into dub late in the proceedings - the fifth cut actually, hell, at least I made it that far - doesn't get you off the hook. Just say "No" and switch to heroin. Or a good brand of Irish whisky. Bushmills or Jameson. It helped me through this atrocity. (Mammoth) ds

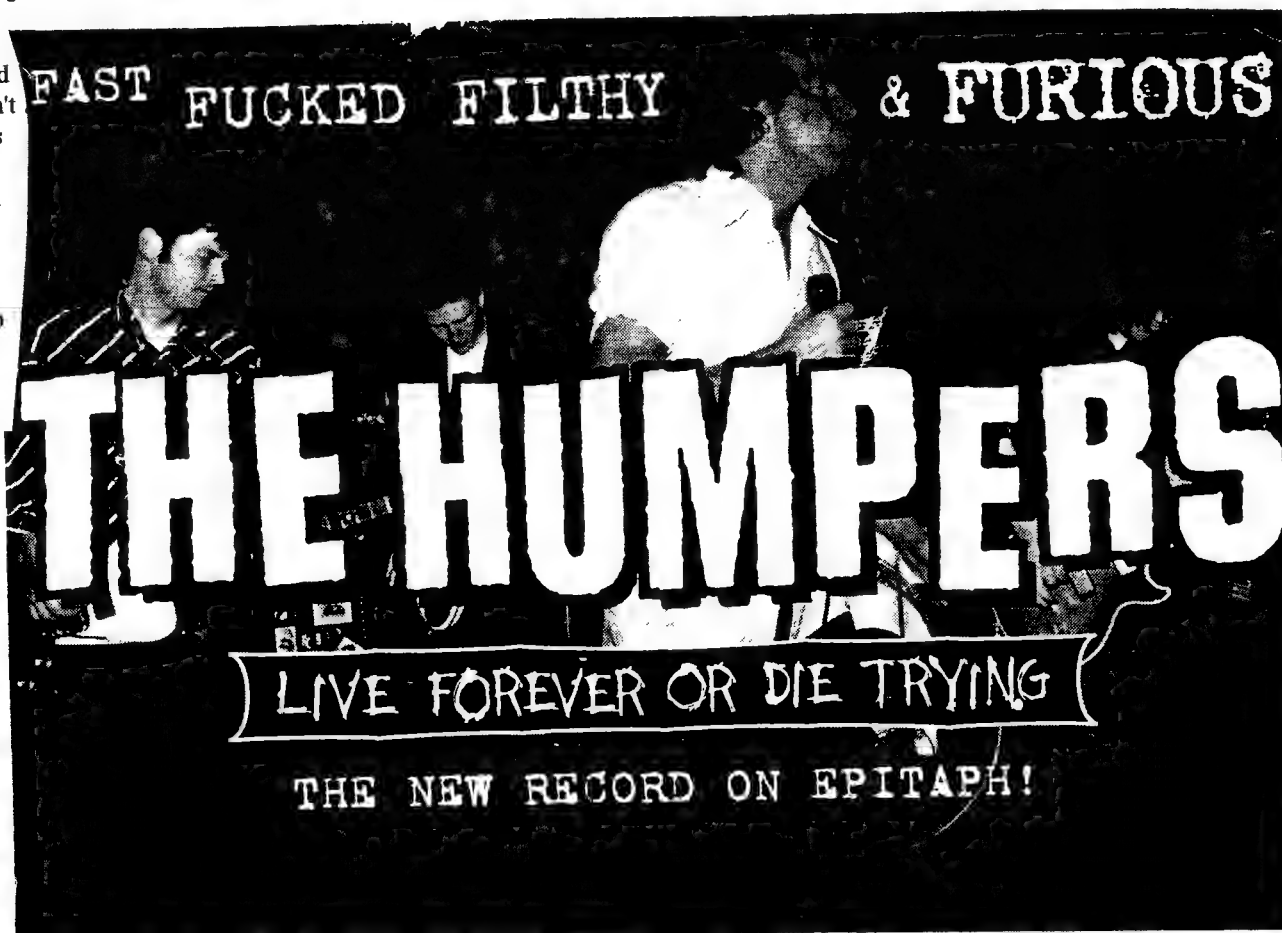
Combustible Edison

Schizophrenic!

This is the follow-up to *I, Swinger*, the disc which introduced disaffected affluent middle class caucasian youth to the mass produced easy-listening sounds of the fifties. I would venture to say however, that those intrigued enough by the music of Swinger to search out the work of Edison progenitors like Esquivel, Three Suns, Lex Baxter, ended up confused and rather disappointed. That muzak was composed for a different audience. One that believed there was a future. One that thought Mamie Eisenhower the quintessence of haute couture. One that had little doubt homosexuality was a form of mental illness. Today's hip white audience desires the shriek of anarchy,

the dissonance of the dissolute, the shrug of the defeated. Combustible Edison knows this and so they've taken the nonsense of this

period, made it a little louder, a little edgier and perhaps most importantly, quite disturbing. You can talk all you want about the Shirley Bassett/John Barry influences of "Bluebeard" or the Martin Denny tikisms of "One Eyed Monkey" but really, in the final analysis, it's a moot point. Ici cabaret pour psychotics, carnival pour lost souls. Don't be fooled by the soigne and insouciant manner in which the combo presents itself. This is brilliant and disturbing music. (Sub Pop) ds



Confront James

All Gotten Hatred

Confront James is jamaholic Greg Ginn's latest assault on musical barriers. This time 'round, the former Black Flag guitarist joins forces with vocalist Richard Ray to merge Ginn's trademark squall with Ray's industrial/dance tendencies. Ray's vocals range from nerdy speak/sing to Morrisonish bellow to faux falsetto, but they aren't necessarily engaging. Confront James is more interesting conceptually than it is in practice, mostly because the songs blend together without distinction or variety. This is one set that probably sounded better while it was being recorded than it does while it's being played. (SST) df

Dick Curless

Traveling Through

West of the Arkham Hills grew a man fantastical in strength and shape. Dick Curless, troubador of black-gummed long-haul truck drives and eldritch horror. He sang of the common man and worshipped the devil and every song he sang had a patina of restlessness and diabolic oppression, as well as a touch of the unreal, and the grotesque. No one who has ever listened to Dic's baritoned 1965 trucker classic "A Tombstone Every Mile" has been able to forget the sense of unreality in this unsettling song. Today artists shiver as they give ear to the sepulchral sounds of a man whose mystery was as much of the spirit as of the eye. Unfortunately, "Tombstone" is missing from this collection of wistful, near-death recordings. Listen anyway and think on

Dead Man Walking

Soundtrack

Rarely do I call into play Socrates moral aesthetic - is something no matter how well done worth doing - but with a work like this, you're almost forced to. This is a collection of twelve original songs, each representing specific scenes and characters, for a film about a killer and the nun who befriends him. Yes, a portion of the profits are going to the families' of murder victims, but does that justify the project? My heart bleeds for the abused children of the world. But for the sick, vicious monsters that so many of these children become I have little sympathy. And little interest in a soundtrack released as a concomitant to a "heartwrenching" study of such monsters. Yes, the contributions of the likes of Springsteen, Patti Smith, Tom Waits, et al. are stark, haunting and often quite moving. The teaming of Eddie Vedder and Pakistani singer Nurat Fateh Ali Khan on two cuts exotically mournful. Me? I'll mourn Mickey Mantle. And the need for beauty to go rooting about in the foul rag and bone shop of the heart for inspiration. (Columbia) ds



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the dark Maine woods of Curless' resting place having been cut down but his storm-weathered stele mirroring the sky and rippling in the sun. (Rounder) sj & ds

Teisco Del Rey

Plays Music For Lovers

Men. Women. Austin's Teisco Del Rey, the King of el-cheapo guitar, wants to speak to you. Frankly, intimately and with candor about a sensitive subject too many of us are afraid to broach. Imagine. After months of pursuit, you're unwitting prey is snuggled cozily in front of your fireplace. The drinks are chilled; the room flickers with roseate warmth. The success or failure of your quest rests entirely upon your next move. One misstep, an inappropriate whisper, a mood-deflating solecism and you could find yourself watching a cable access channel and cursing your mother while your date hails the first taxi home. Why leave such moments in the hands of Dame Fortune? Make it a night to remember with this gentile lovers' rock.

Echobelly

On Imagine *Parallel Lines*-period Debbie Harry fronting *Queen* is *Dead*-period Smiths, and you've got a fix on Echobelly. Although Sonya Aurora Madan's vision of the modern urban nightmare is nowhere near as seamy as, say, Lou Reed's, her songs, with melodies by guitarist Glenn Johanssen, are consistently clever. Sean Slade's production creates a layered guitar sound that never quite strays into bombast. *On* isn't quite wonderful, but it's certainly worthy. (Rhythm King/Epic) df

Music is the food of love after all, and judging from the looks of Teisco, he's never missed a meal. He is your man. Instructions for play: simply ease this easy player into your cd and enjoy your companion's sudden ministrations. (Upstart) sj & ds



5

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Waitin' For George

Bullshit! Waitin' for Leon and Joe is more like it. Cocker and Russell that is. God damn, maybe its all the Black Labels I've been drinking since noon - it's now about midnight - but I'll be a whatever it is I'll be if this isn't a fine simulacrum of that Mad Dogs and Englishman nonsense that was all the rage circa 1969. Loved it then. Love it now. Glad to see young kids like Luther Russell respect tradition enough to recreate it. Note for note. I mean I put on the live on tour record at the same time I was playing this thing and I could not tell the difference! (I cued the platter up at the exact moment I started the cd for accuracy's sake.) Those racuous, up-on-the-tighrope piano histrionics, the moronic Prestonish glissandos, dem greasy guitars, dat delta ladylike background vocals . .

And that's gotta be Price and Keys on the horns right? Right? Fug it. I don't care if this really is the outtakes from THE TOUR it's fabulous and if Rolling Stone can put Rancid on the cover and not even mention The Clash, these guys merit, at the very least, a non-condescending, heart-felt interview in *Relix*. And a place in your music library. 'Cause you dispensed with all this nonsense after *Carney* even though you knew you shouldn't have but you couldn't help yourself what with having bought into all the lies about dope and alcohol and girls and Kennedy not really being such a great President, etc. and, and . . . And now here you are. A child again and ready to step out of the dark and into the light. (American) ds

Hammerhead

dub, the big city

Let us have the crashing down of shop blinds, slamming doors, the hubbub and shuffling of crowds, the variety of din from decaying tenements, railways, iron foundries, steel mills, printing works, nuclear power plants and superannuated subways. Poems are written by fools like me but only those truly understanding of modern anomie can make rock this arrestingly noisy. (AmRep) ds

Kip Hanrahan

All Roads are Made of the Flesh

Recorded in various locations over nine years with a cast of musicians that includes bassist Jack Bruce and pianists Allen Toussaint and Don Pullen, *All Roads* is a hodgepodge which jumps around between cocktail jazz and polyrhythmic fusion. Hanrahan doesn't play a note on it, but oversees the entire project and wrote most of this. The works lack of continuity create an inconsistency of mood, but the smoother passages work fine as background music. (American Clave) df

Hotel X

Ladders

Strangely enough, SST Record is attempting a resurgence in part through more jazz-oriented recordings, such as *Ladders*. The multi-instrumental quartet Hotel X creates a variety of settings which isn't going to make anyone throw away their Charlie Parker and John Coltrane records. But, with 12 tracks that clock in at under 45 minutes, they avoid point less sprawl. Moreover, while not adhering to stale formulae, they push ahead with a healthy respect for traditions that steers clear of pop drivel. The originals ain't bad, but their cover of Fela's "Black Man Cry" and McCoy Tyner's "Message from the Nile" are

Lalbach

Rerelease of an experimental industrial-techno work composed by obviously deranged Yugoslavian youths Originally thrust upon unsuspecting Yugos in 1985, the lp was immediately banned by ruler-for-life Marshall Tito who later reversed himself upon discovering that excerpts from his speeches were being used by the combo in the place of lyrics. Germans, always more hipper than their eastern european bretheren, opened their arms to the band, praising their canny appropriations of Swans' storm and stress, Neubauten bildungsrobotman, and manly Nazi fashions. English speaking peoples were indifferent. A shame, really, as this musique would have made a perfect soundtrack to the fascist landscape being hammered out in Thatcher's Britain and Reagan's Amerika. Two unnecessary bonus tracks are added in an effort to display these otherwise morose Slavs sense of humor. They didn't have one then and they don't have one now. Irony is their beat. (ROIR) ds

LL Cool J

Mr. Smith

"Word up! You know what I'm sayin'?" This must mean something to Cool because he asks us this about two million times before the tedious platter plays itself out. Still I feel I must reply. Here is my answer and it comes from your moma, Cool. She tole us you knocked out. Must be them 14 hits to the dome that done turned you from a cool panther into some crotch-strokin', jive-talkin', new-jack, velour-soul idjit. Where's the hard beats, the hot riffs, motherfucker? Oh yeah, at the end wif da gansta'ish "Get Da Drop On 'Em." Dig that hollow reverberatin' guitar loop and my man emotin' like the fine ghetto method actor we know he be. But that's it. Word up! Know what I'm sayin'? In other words, this DEFINitely don't JAM. And the rhymes ain't no better than the shit in *Green Eggs & Ham*. (Def Jam) ds

Man or Astroman

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Ladder's highlights. While Hotel X needs some renovation, supporting this is far more noble than buying anything on which David Sanborn is a featured artist. (SST) df

believe the attempt to clothe the trio in the garments of the ineffectual. Yes, there's a thin line between suave and stupid and these space alienists walk it with aplomb. (Touch & Go) ds & sj

Marilyn Manson

Smells Like Children

The Alice Cooper of the 90s minus the melodic chops, the self-deprecating sense of humor and the fashion sense. While it's a step up from the debut, thanks to the bombastic industrial treatment of Trent Reznor, we're still talking about a little made to sound like a lot (What they wouldn't do for something as good as "Under My Wheels"). Aside from the purposeless covers (Eurythmics, Patti Smith, Screaming Jay Hawkins) there are only four sleazy originals squeezed amongst putatively disturbing bits of audio verite. Right. It's a concept cd designed to give whomever it is bothering to listen, the creeps. Not the willies. The creeps. Which it does at times. The way a retard surreptitiously eating the contents of his nose would. Bravo boys and don't forget to include the coprophagia song on your next release: Necrophilous Interruptus. (Interscope) ds

Joe Meek

It's Hard to Believe: The Amazing World of Joe Meek

Buddy Holly obsessed British murderer, pedophilic homosexual and legendary studio genius Joe Meek is primarily remembered today, if at all, for the Tornados' "Telstar," his ultra-fab early-sixties instrumental tribute to Soviet space exploration. The paranoid, cross-dressing Meek, however, produced hundreds of acts and thousands of recordings, reducing each to an absurd fantasy piece pulled from the depths of his terribly hectored imagination. Almost all are incomprehensibly weird. At first blush the bulk of Meek's recorded output sounds like muzak for autistic children. But listen closely. NO, closer. Put your ear next to the speaker. Press hard and grip the laminated wood. And you will be transported into a world of . . . fey psychosis. The brilliantly insidious Tornados, the bold, physically impeccable Moontrekkers, cold, blond uber-liebchen Heinz, Screaming Lord Sutch, and more. Ethereal background choruses, absurdly tinny roller-rink organ, hauntingly echoed guitar riffs, canned drumming, glistening melodies and jejune and often maliciously inserted special effects. Swirling, jet-propelled instrumentals. Ballads so mawkish Tammy Faye Baker would pass on them. Joe Meek was truly sui generis. Misunderstood and hated, by himself and others. In early 1967, eight years to the day of Buddy Holly's death, Meek was sequestered in his London studio perfecting the ultimate musical tribute to his beyond-the-grave idol and spirit guide. Mrs. Shenton, the landlady whom Joe believed lived only to torment him, rapped on Joe's door to collect the rent. Sensing danger all around, Joe immediately armed himself with a rifle left lying about by jungvolk boy-toy Heinz and dispatched the pernicious Mrs Shenton forthwith. Meek then turned the gun on himself, splattering his musical genius over much of his burgeoning rough trade porno collection. Dolce et decorum est pro patriae. (Razor & Tie) sj & ds

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The Mekons

Pussy King of the Pirates

Last time I saw The Mekons they were hanging out in a Loisada restaurant cum club called The Pig. They weren't doing anything. Just acknowledging adoring epigones. I was told they did this quite often. Especially on weekends. Now they've teamed up with one of their biggest fans. She is not a musician. Her name is Kathy Acker. She is supposed to be a hot young experimental writer. Very into sex. So who isn't? But I digress. Mainly because I want to. Where was I? Oh yes, this collaboration. It is dull. It is useless. It is silly. Children will hate it. As will you as this wretched nursery crime sing-song is unlikely to appeal to anyone other than Ms. Acker's mother. Her father having long since disowned her as a talentless poseur. (River of Ca Ca Records) ds & sj

Mojack

Merchandising Murder

Mojack, another of Greg Ginn's instrumental projects, adds saxophonist Tony Atherton to Ginn's usual guitar-bass-drums combination. The result is often not much different from Ginn's other instro work with gone, but is at other times close to early King Crimson with fusion tendencies. Unlike much of Greg's more recent work, Mojack has its share of noteworthy melodies. The addition of a second solo, instrument provides Ginn with some much needed tension for his guitar meanderings. Mojack is definitely a direction that Ginn should pursue further. (SST) df

Murder Junkies

Feed My Sleaze

Backup band for GG finds Allin's brother manfully leading these sociopaths through seven sleazy punk metal outrages. Can't quite make out the lyrics but I don't think I have to with titles like "Waking Up In A Pool Of Piss" and "Stiff Cold Fuck." Sound is basically . . . loud. Distorted chunky guitar assault overlaid with hoarse, edge-of-hysteria vocals and beyond-hysteria six-string solos. Clocks in at only 18:22 but its a sizzling, disturbing and frightening 18:22. (Alive) ds

New Bomb Turks

Pissing Out The Poison

For those of you who have thus far dismissed these Turks as another neo-punk band (hip insider's snide aside: must have been listening to Green Day and believing the hype) here's the goods: a disc chock full of miscellany, juvenalia and just plain analia (cf. "The Anal Swipe") for your edification and delectation. Delectation: delight in sonic, atavistic roar made manifest. Edification. Well let's think about this one. Punk done with a capital P. Garage done as in roof blown off. And classic snot rock a la Stones/Dolls/Modern Lovers and not so classic rock (Hawkwind!) done with a disdainful dismissive nod to convention. It's new skin for the old ceremony. Hardly, the "swill" promised by the boys on the cover. (Crypt) ds

P

Gibby looked at Johnny. Johnny wanted to run. But the movie kept moving as planned. Gibby drove it into Johnny. He drove it in. He drove it deep. He drove it home. Johnny felt his knees crashing against the locker. Johnny felt his knees crashing against the locker. Sobbing hysterically! Then suddenly! Johnny gets the feeling . . . He's being surrounded by . . . Horses! Horse! Horses! (Flea, Steve Jones and Ween's Andrew) Coming in all directions. White! Silver! Silent! With their noses in flame. He's being surrounded by: Flea! Jones! Weiss! . . .

Competent, highly polished slightly bent rock. Cynical, melodic, brummagens for the reader of alternative music magazines. They played while River Phoenix gasped for air outside the Viper Room. Oooh! How chi chi! (Capitol) ds

Passengers

Original Soundtracks 1

Neither Brian Eno nor U2 are noted jokesters. Eno is seen largely as an egghead, while the member of U2, particularly Bono, often come off as flamboyant dipshits. *Passengers* succeeds as high tech background music warmer than much of Eno's more ambient music while avoiding U2's overbearing excesses. It's serene, but there's definitely a pulse and even a glimpse of humor. The line notes, which outline the non-existent films to which each song is a soundtrack, are also quite funny. The unlikely guest turn by Luciano Pavarotti on "Miss Sarajevo" somehow works, but "Elvis Ate America"

Pain Teens

Beast of Dreams

Chaotic clamormeisters und doomsayers have toned things down a bit as well as pared many of their compositions of the furious excess which characterized their first five discs. While this pruning may result in greater airplay the consequences are often less than desirable. The orientalisms of tracks like "Swimming" and "Moonray" lend them an air of exoticism but fail to disguise the impoverished sensibilities. "Invitation," like so much of *Beast* is meandering and annoying, relying on lead singer Bliss Blood's languorous vocalizing to rescue a composition almost devoid of musical ideas. If you're going to work a single pedestrian riff to death best surround it with interesting sounds. Only "Accusing Eyes" a furious trance rocker and "Swamp" a bluesy bit of dread replete with all manner of cacophony recall the intemperate Teens we know and love. Mark this down as postadolescent and wait for them to become comfortable with the fact their faces have cleared up (Trance) ds.

treads on dangerous ground. "Would have been a sissy without Johnny Cash." Huh? Them's fighting words, Bono! May the King practice karate moves on your elfin mick ass in the afterlife! But then again consider the source: Even after *Spinal Tap*, Bono lacked the good sense to stay away from E's grave for the filming of *Rattle and Hum*. (Island) df

Railroad Jerk

One Track Mind

Railroad Jerk knows how to make a lack of great technical ability work in their favor. Their primitive rhythms and disjointed guitars careen all over the place, but somehow, they manage to hang together without complexity or clutter. They blend '60 garage rock riffs, arrhythmic psychedelic leads, and neo-Velvets' guitar interplay into a unique backdrop for Marcellus Hall's boozily nasal vocals. Top it all off with strong, humorous songwriting, credited to the entire band, and it's easy to see how *One Track Mind* made a lot of top 10 lists for 1995. (Matador) df

Lou Reed

Set the Twilight Reeling

For his first album in four years, Lou Reed retreats from the album-as-book concept of his last three sets for a disc of basic, guitar-driven songs. Reed puts away the MIDI's and varies his guitar palette more than he has in years, playing acoustic guitar playing acoustic and even a 12-string on "Adventurer." Reed's inconsistent songwriting and unbalanced sound mix, however, make *Twilight* a spotty affair.

Since 1992, Reed has broken up his marriage and commenced a live-in relationship with performance artist Laurie Anderson. His take on these events reveals him to be a bit of a prick. "Trade In" deals rather coldly with ending his marriage to take

up with Anderson.

"Riptide" refers repeatedly to a woman, presumably his estranged wife, as being "out of her mind/With the riptide." Or as he sneers in "Hooky Wooky," "None of my old flames ever talk tome/When things end for me they end/They take your pants your money your name/But the song still remains."

The disc starts poorly with "Egg Cream," a nostalgic look at a fave soft drink over a plodding rhythm, and "NYC Man," yet another tired song about being from The Big Apple. But things pick up with "Finish Line," a tribute to late Velvet Underground guitarist Sterling Morrison.

"Sex with Your Parents, Part II (Motherfucker)" amusingly posits a theory that incest is the only thing more disgusting than certain prominent Republican politicians, but lacks subtlety. "Adventurer" boasts the album's best riff in a tribute to Anderson.

The biggest flaw in *Twilight* is its sound mix. Reed places his guitars so far out front that he eliminates any possibility of creative tension between musicians rendering faceless the contributions of bassist Fernando Saunders and drummer Tony Smith. Smith sounds barely awake on "Egg Cream."

In the past, Reed has been known to go back into a studio after an album was done and remix the entire record to make his part more prominent. This time

Martin Rev

See Me Ridin'

The former keyboardist for synth-rock minimalist duo Suicide describes his latest release as bubble gum for the 21st Century and he's not too far off the mark. This is buoyant, simple - often little more than a looped three note keyboard progression with de minimis counterpoint - stuff but the melodies owe more to the Brill Building than the 1910 Fruitgum Company. The singing of Rev, though, is something else altogether, his whispery vocals are pure Buddy Holly. After several sessions of shock treatment that is. Nevertheless, this lends the moon-june lyrics of love lost, gained or aroused a sepulchral tone heard to best effect on sacerdotal compositions like "I Heard Your Name," and "Hop Scotch." The other pieces, three of which are precious, if somewhat innocuous instrumentals, suffer by comparison; yet are rather haunting in their small quiet way. (ROIR) ds



around, he just turned himself up from the beginning. In doing so, he forgot that the goal of record production is to make the instruments mesh as a cohesive whole. Yes, Lou, you are the focus of your new disc, but, from a production standpoint, your cd is not all the better for it. (Sire) df

Roxy Music

The Thrill of it All

Along with David Bowie and, at times Lou Reed, Roxy Music made the otherwise dull mid-1970's bearable. In both fashion and musical sense, most of what passes for English rock in the last 20 years owes a debt to Roxy.

The Thrill of it All, a four-disc British import box set, documents their 11-year history (1972-83). Their eight studio albums are featured on the first three discs, though some of the song choices seem arbitrary. *Thrill* includes at least five tracks from each record and provides a thorough portrait of their evolution from quirky sonic explorers with decidedly European pop sensibility to purveyors of layered makeout music.

The first disc is largely comprised of tracks from Brian Eno's tenure in the band. Ferry's early songs and singing are over the top. Moreover, the band hadn't quite learned to play yet. Roxy's secret weapon on the early records in Eno, who makes his synthesizer scream, cry and grunt like no one before or since.

The second disc picks up after Eno's departure in 1973. On *Stranded* and *Country Life*, Ferry wrote many of his best songs, notably "Mother of Pearl," "Out of the Blue," and "The Thrill of it All," and toned down most of his vocal excesses. In addition, the rest of the group, notably guitarist Phil Manzanera and saxophonist Andy MacKay, added some technique to their style. Roxy's arty funk was never better.

Roxy Music *cont.*

Disc three showcases their final three studio albums. Although these LPs are somewhat formulaic, the hush waves of sound make an elegant background for Ferry's crooning. The fourth disc is a compilation of singles and non-LP B-sides that, despite a few gems, consists largely of throwaways.

Thrill's packaging is exemplary and lacks the typical box-set self-congratulatory essay on how the world is a better place because so-and-so was born. It includes, however, quotes from favorable reviews. In addition, the packaging includes several photo outtakes of the scantily clad models which donned Roxy LP covers, as well as complete personnel listings and single sleeve reproductions.

Roxy had a considerable United States following, but there are no plans to release *Thrill* domestically. Unless the non-release is for licensing reasons, it is an inexcusable disservice to an underappreciated group. (Virgin) df

Ruby

Salt Peter

What a fuckhead! Ur new waver throws down an uninviting mixture (save for the hip shaking single) of trendy, upbeat, cutsey sass pop and generic maudlin mush. Ruby don't take your songs to town. 'Cause they'll be folks waiting with shotguns to put you in the ground. (Poo Poo Records) sj & ds

Rustic Hinge

Replicas

Rustic Hinge was the Crazy World of Arthur Brown after Artie left to form Kingdom Come. They were so underground they barely existed - I don't think any of their early Seventies recordings saw official release until the late Eighties.

Their forte was high-strung acid-blues jams, with a little Bartok and raga thrown in for added spice. The resulting stew was damn tasty indeed: much of this sounds like instrumental outtakes from *Trout Mask Replica*, which should be reason enough for you to get this. If that's not enough, though, there's an Arthur Brown performance tacked on the end of side one. (He sounds like he's trying to invoke Satan from the last stall in a men's room.) (Reckless) db

Kim Salmon & The Surrealists

Sin Factory

Iggly-wiggley funk-Stooge fusion from former Scientist Kim Salmon. That's Kim Salmon. The legendary Kim Salmon. Kim Salmon. The Salmon. Salmon, man. Look, we've never heard of this megacult chanson de longueur. So he has this fanatical following. Why have we never heard of him? Maybe we were at work. Or shopping at Wal-Mart or something. We don't really know. We don't really care either. The moodier, slower pieces take some getting used to but the bluesy, sexy hook-driven things really give us woodies. Big woodies. Legendary woodies. Woodies, man. (Deep Six) sj & ds

Scorn

Gyral

New (Union Ball) Jack Swing! If you're swinging with Jack Daniels and psycilocybin whilst dancing with the devil in the pale moonlight that is! Neurasthenic syncopated rhythms. The fundament for eerie musical phrases laced with desanguinated synthetized cries and whispers, spacey blips and two-note upper-register piano plinks. The music of Death's dream kingdom. Deep sounds amidst the silence of graves. (Earache) ds



Sepultura

Roots

Look, we kid you a lot about heavy rock, death metal and all manner of natural alloys but these guys, Jesus! This is a veritable gehenna of sturm und drang. These Brazilians got chops, they rock, and they understand the meaning of simplicity and repetition. Their time signatures are songs unto themselves and every cut is imaginatively arranged to boot, chock full of fascinating textures and eldritch bits of business. Plus Cavalera, the lead singer, sounds like he just crawled his way out of the mausoleum. And is none to happy about it. They'll have you wondering why you spent your lunch money on the Metallica box set, laughing at Black Sabbath the way you once did when you knew better, and dreaming of a time when the world was young and your were able to see it all with crystal clarity. Am I making myself clear? I have seen the past, present, and future of metal and it is, in a word, Sepultura. (Roadrunner) ds

Skinny Puppy

The Process

One does not like to heap abuse on the dead; still, after listening to this soporific, if rather loud, mawkish piece of industrial techno nothing, I'm inclined to think that the overdose suicide of Dwayne Goettel might have been a smart career move. Of course, he didn't write the lyrics. The man responsible for that is the one deserving of Goettel's ignominious end.

Bruce Springsteen

The Ghost of Tom Joad

Springsteen's best set since *Born in the USA* is a depressing affair similar in sound and spirit to *Nebraska*. The backing is spare, with Bruce accompanied only by his acoustic guitar with a few other instruments adding depth and color. Although *Tom Joad* comes up short melodically, its lyrics make real and believable the struggles of abused immigrants, parolees, and newly laid-off factory workers, i.e. downtrodden people who are becoming left behind due to shifting political winds. While there's not a laugh in sight until the closing track, "My Best Was Never Good Enough," this is an important record, if most uneasy listening. (Columbia) df

The Tailgators

It's A Hog Groove

dreamed of chubby, over-forty, mid-level professionals crammed into tight overalls playing in a non-smoking former-VFW hall for pale complected, flat-chested women with stringy hair and pot-bellied flannel-wearing beardsos drinking cheap white zinfadel while swaying languorously out of time to the bloodless music. A nightmare which refuses to leave us. Even in moments of extreme sobriety. (Upstart) ds & sj

Thankfully, this is the last any of us will ever hear of the dreadfully uninteresting aggregate known as Skinny Puppy. Resquiat in felche. (American) ds

Third World War

One

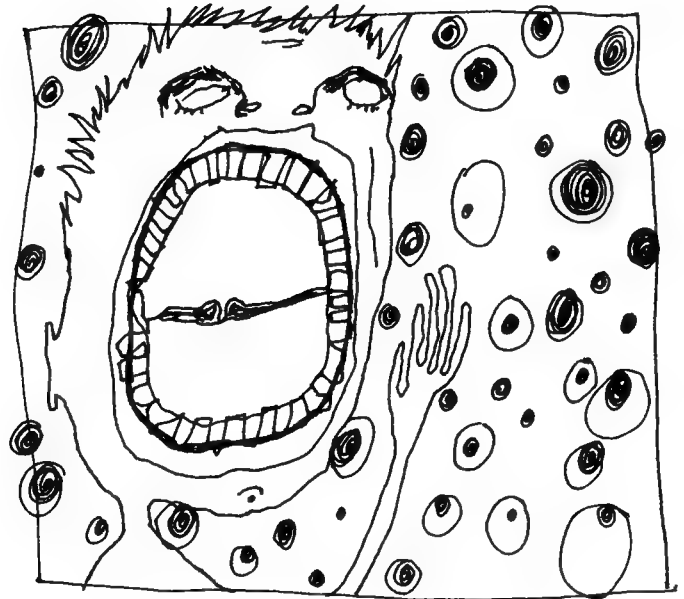
This early-Seventies British hard rock band sounds just like a psychedelic version of the Clash. Swear to God. Vocalist Terence Stamp is a dead-ringer for Joe Strummer, his stuttering guitar attack is startlingly reminiscent of Mick Jones', and at times bassist Jim Avery lays down fluid lines that could've been lifted right from *London Calling*.

Their songs have the same socialist/communist themes, too ("Working Class Man," "Preaching Violence," "Get Out of Bed You Dirty Red," etc.). It's certainly not the best thing I've heard from this era, but it is one of the most unusual. You just gotta wonder if the pre-pubescent Strummer got his rocks off to this. (Repertoire) db

Trashwomen

Spend The Night With

Better called look at my hot full asses. Look quickly because when that first cut kicks in, a smashing big beach intro bottomed out with a cheeky hollow drum sound, you'll think you're listening to Dick Dale or The Ventures. Until those under-recorded vocals begin to make their presence felt. In all the right places... Catfight as art. Repressed sexuality as cthonic expression. Go back to the pictures. Then drift with those ridiculously screechy voices. God! It's heaven: faux-full-figured femmes fetchingly frolicking with frothy fantastical surfisms. The gals pride themselves on having recorded in low-fi but *Night* has a big, full, almost overwhelming presence. Just like The Trashwomen theselves. Well, at least the parts that count. (Estrus) ds



by CAMILLA CAMILLA

Various

Day of the Dead Soundtrack

'rip! Someone went and did it. Recorded, in its entirety, possibly the only soundtrack in history written before the movie! You mean you haven't seen it? Well, this really nowhere couple go off the side of the road and somehow end up in a graveyard where some boohoo (The Amazing -and extremely fey - Criswell) conducts these unholy rites wherein these hot dead babes are forced to dance half-nekkid to surreal cocktail lounge music, deranged mambos, psychotic snake charmery and the like. After each performance, the alarmingly effeminate Criswell portentously declaims: "She pleases me. Permit her to live in the world of the snakes. Now I will talk to the wolfman and the mummy." "Torture, torture, it pleasures me!" or something equally inane.

Ok, ok, the movie sucks but listening to the entire thing on disc will pleasure you, trust me. There's no way you're going to be disappointed when the dialogue is by Ed Wood and the music by some demented Martian calling himself Jaime Medoza-Nava. (Strangelove) ds



Various

Back From The Grave Vol. 8

There are eight of these? Why do I only have Vol. 1? How terribly unfair. But who said life is fair? The first edition of these obscure garage punk comps is as good as any of the Pebbles collections. And so is this. Where do they find this shit? Is it the same studio band pumping out atavistic cut after atavistic cut? Do I know what I'm talking about? No and that's because I've never heard of any of these combos. Maybe this is a best of Vols. 2 through 7. Hope so. Hate to think I'm missing so much surreal primitive rawk. Anyway, this is essential, 32 mindbending tracks. Performed, to put it charitably, by desperate, snotty nobodies playing and singing like they have nothing to lose. Except their self-respect. I don't have any. So I'll tell you this is essential and hope the boohoos at Crypt take pity on me and send me the goods I now so desperately long to own. (Crypt) ds

Various

Ultra Lounge

For the first time in 35 years, Capitol Records would have us believe, they're opening the vaults to bring us . . . mood muzak! Which today is better known as contempo cocktail. Or space age bachelor pad swing. However you choose to characterize it, it's essentially the sound your father used to seduce your mom (if you're a baby boomer) in his Sears furnished quarters clumsily o'erhanging the garage of some long-forgotten transplanted Midwestern couple. And later, to entertain close-friends while engaging in marathon sessions of canasta or plying them with overcooked meats at a backyard Sunday barbecue or, if he had really achieved a certain measure of success, to coax guests into dancing at those Polynesian-styled pool parties.

There are SIX volumes in the collection and it's criminal not to be able to go into more detail and I wish I could print the beautifully beat liner notes of one R J Smith in their entirety but that's the property of Capitol so let me try, in my own pathetic way, to encapsulate each disc in a few inchoate poetic phrases: *Mondo Exotica* (eldritch bird calls, shimmering vibraphone, bongos, ethereal choruses, tropical melodies, plasticine waterfalls and flaming drinks in hollowed coconuts, fear in a handful of mollusks); *Mambo Fever* (lower middle class reinterpretation of Machito, Prado, Puente et al., old tunes reinvigorated mit de cha cha,

American males drinking and imagining they're as glamorous as Ricky Ricardo which of course no man is, American women swiveling their hips to tinny RCA portables and floor mat dance diagrams imagining they're as desirable as Rita Hayworth which of course no woman is); *Space Capades* (NASA as orgasmic metaphor, theremin, obnoxious whiter than white choruses, faraway lonesome spacey tunes, 59 Cadillac as lunar module); *Bachelor Pad Royale* (languor in feverish nonsense, sex as style/style as sex, biting trumpets, Route 66 as road to nowhere, swank sax, roller-rink organ as aeolian harp, disembodied choruses, piano as smooth as death, orgasms as death, music as substitute for romance or life or post-modernism, noir as birthright, Hugh Hefner as God); *Wild, Cool & Swingin'* (Dino, Damone, Darin & Friends, invitation to the dance, but first the drinks, many drinks, oh let's not stop imbibing, the hell with Elvis and Little Richard, let's rock to Prima and Sammy and even Julie, alcoholism as aesthetic); and finally *Rhapsodesia* (Muzak as the food of love, sex with all the lights on and a broad smile, Jackie Gleason as gatekeeper at the bridge of thighs). (Capitol) ds

Yah Congo meets King Tubby

& Professor At Dub Table

In de seventies. Early, man. De singers ruled de studio. De deejays dem make dem crazy in de dancehall. King Tubby he engineer different. He take de hit an take out de singer. Den he take out ever 'ting. Till all he left is bass and drum. King he now go ta work. Make old vocals drift in an out. Add echo, strange noises an de odd riff of guitar. Dub it tis. Which tis here. Bass move like de girlfrn stretchin in de sun. (De organ, when lead, sound righteous. Religious like.) Guitar or piano drop in. Let single chord vamp o'er groove me say, whilst liquifying into de melodic fragment or echoey remnant. Den drop out til all dat's deret is de bass & syncopated riddims at moments, sah. Underpinit t'all wid a high-hat bit ah drummery. Allow de horns just so. Resulting? Simple dem but I & I infectious. Insidious yet affectionate. De soft swoon o sinful riddims wid de childish malicious. (Roir) ds

Check Out These Crazy Sounds We Were Too Lazy To Review:

Chrome Cranks/Kim Salmon EP (Space Baby); Pulp (Island); Grotus (London); Boy Howdy (Shimmy Disc); Godhead Silo (Sub Pop); Cows (AmRep)

CRYPT RECORDS HAS JUST RELEASED THE EIGHTH VOLUME IN A SERIES OF THE MOST FRANTIC GARAGE PUNK BANDS FROM THE MID-1960S! NOW FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE TRUE STORY OF ITS MOLDY MASCOTS CAN BE TOLD!!! THOSE ROTTING ROCKERS WHO, FOR THE LOVE OF PSYCHOTIC TUNES, CAME..

BACK FROM THE GRAVE

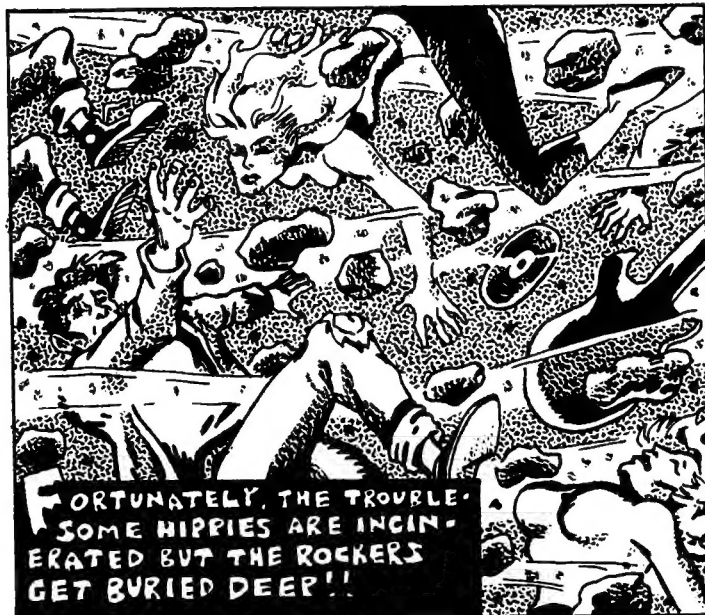
by
**MORT
TEDD**

SOME 30 YEARS AGO, IN A TOWN WE'LL CALL CRYPTVILLE, A PILE OF WILD ROCKERS PARTY IN A FIELD NEAR A GOVERNMENT RESEARCH SITE!



UNKNOWNST TO THEM, SOME OUT-OF-TOWN HIPPIES INVADE, PROTESTING MILITARY PROJECTS BEING DEVELOPED THERE! THE ROCKERS' REVEL IS DISRUPTED

...AS A HIPPIE TERRORIST BLOWS UP THE PLANT, IGNITING ALL KINDS OF RADIOACTIVE SUBSTANCES!



FORTUNATELY, THE TROUBLE... SOME HIPPIES ARE INCINERATED BUT THE ROCKERS GET BURIED DEEP!!

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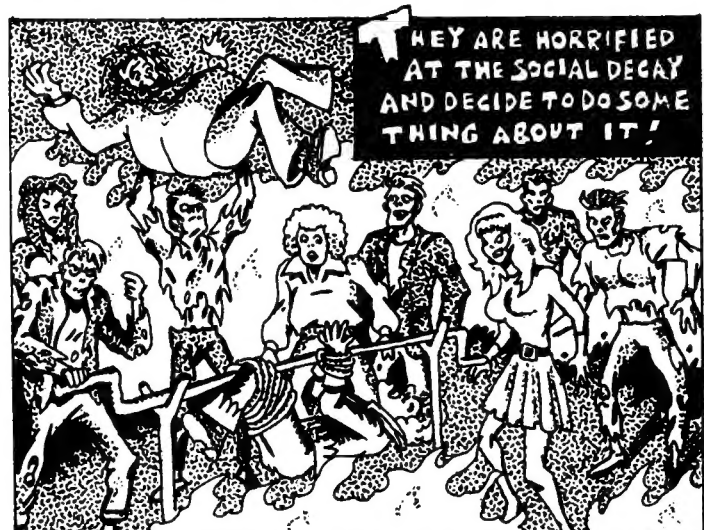


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I'm back again. Seems the Pope of Ohio has taken a permanent vacation leaving me the thankless task of sorting through the flotsom jamming the Brutarian wastebaskets. It wasn't easy, but I think I've found a few things that might pique your interest. Well, maybe not but if you peruse this stuff in the bathroom the way you're supposed to you're not likely to get too disappointed. I mean if it's a boring read you can always use the thing to wipe your ass with. Capice?

Anyway, the first thing that caught my eye was this nasty, puerile bit of business put out by the Brutarian publisher's ex-wife Diabla. Now normally I don't go about biting the hand that feeds me but since Diabla's a helluva lot better looking than Dominick and I ain't interested in breaking something off in the latter, he can just go and fuck himself if you know what I'm saying. Diabla's rag is called **MALEFACT** and its chock full of highly detailed drawings, mostly obscene, that you could stare at for hours. Especially if you're stoned, which I have no doubt most of the artists were when dreaming up and laying out this stuff. Some big names here - Mike Diana, Nick Bougas - and a nifty splatter-noir story by co-publisher Tom Crites to boot. I'll probably lose my job over this but hey, I'm getting paid peanuts so don't worry about it send \$5.00 to Box 464, Alexandria, VA 22313-0464.

A lot of mags and zines push the envelope, Fuck and Answer Me are two publications which come readily to mind; yet I'm willing to bet the brains behind both of the aforementioned would be a bit taken aback by **NECROEROTIC**, a tiny zeroxed bit of business celebrating the time dishonored practice of necrophilia. Stories, poems, some historical research and yes, pictures of naked dead girls. The prose ain't likely to knock your socks off but let's cut the publisher a little slack shall we? He's obviously laboring under a severe

handicap. Such as? Clinical insanity. Two simoleons sent to John at Box 92303, Warren, MI 48092, will get you this twisted thing.

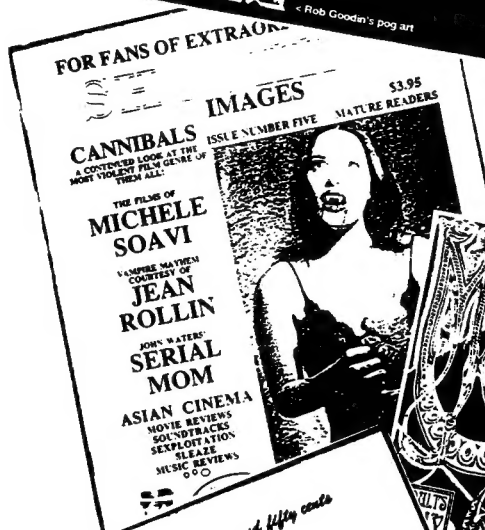
Little Lynn is hardly what I'd call twisted but she's plenty smart and watching her deconstruct and just generally kick around antiquated 20th Century American notions of femininity sure is a hell of a lot of fun. Lynn's stage is **MYSTERY DATE** and in issue number four she starts things off by drubbing former Miss America Vonda Van Dyke and while administering the beating has the reader not only laughing but questioning his or her idea of beauty. From there its on to a disquieting disquisition on marriage and a look at thrift store books on the subject. I have no idea who this Lynn broad is but she's remarkably provocative and perceptive and I have to confess that it broke my heart when she admitted that she'd recently gotten married. A bird this sensitive and entertaining is one in a million. (\$2.00 in cash to Lynn Peril, Box 641592, San Francisco, CA 94164-1592).

There's just something about the insouciant allure of Polynesian art. So primitive. Yet so recherche. Elvis did a whole room of it. Wan aesthete alcoholics will travel to exotic locales like Staten Island in search of restaurants authentically decorated in the style. There is no cure for the love of things Tiki. Now there is a magazine for such desperate creatures: **TIKI NEWS**. It's delightfully small, tan and full of photos of jejeune objets d'Oceania and articles on all manner of things exotic and alluring. Served up with a reserve obviously intended to obscure the pathetic addiction of its publishers, the News also includes recipies for exotic rum punches. And for disaster. (\$10 for six issues to Schwarz Grafiken, 1349 Preston Way, Venice, CA 90291)

... Come on in one and all. Leave the kiddies behind but come on in folks. And take a gander at the people that time forgot. Yes, ladies and gentlemen, these people are freaks. Freaks of nature. Do not feel ashamed. Do not feel sorry. At the price of \$9.95 (plus postage) I, ladies and gentlemen, would not feel sorry for anyone. **SHOCKED AND AMAZED!** the beautifully produced, written and researched magazine celebrating the side show, the grind show, the back end show, the ten-in-one show but not, thank God, Your Show of Shows. Publisher James Taylor, thankfully, keeps a respectful distance from his subject, and avoids the cheap shots and smarmy tone one normally finds in books obsessed with losers and monstrosities (oops!) like this. No. That's a joke. A very bad joke. S&A is anything but however, and after perusing its seventy or so marvelous pages you'll come away with newfound respect, and perhaps affection, for the truly special individuals that make up the world of the carny. Packed with rare photos and illustrations by such luminaries as Danny Hellman this perfect bound publication is the find of the season. (Atomic Books, 229 West Read St., Baltimore, MD 21201)

If you're into garage punk you're going to fall hard for **HERE 'TIS**, a zine devoted to obscure sixties ephemera. In fact, the publication itself is dedicated to the transmogrification of itself into a cult artyfact, coming out only every four or five years or so. The latest issue gives you the poop on the legendary Shadows Of Knight and the not-so legendary Undertakers as well as a confessional from Mark Lindsay, the guiding light behind Paul Revere & The Raiders. A lot of this has more than you need to know but without guys like this much of a seminal rock and roll era would be hopelessly lost in the mists of time. What do you mean, "good riddance to bad rubbish"? \$5.00 to Jeff Jarema for #6 or the boss best of #7, Box 2092, Raleigh, NC 27628)

There are a million cult film fanzines publishing today but **SHOCKING IMAGES** is a bit more entertaining than most thanks to its quirky taste and irreverent attitude. And they really try to keep off the psychotronic bandwagon and look for videos outside of the trashy mainstream. Once they realize this is a virtual impossibility and hunker down to talking about what really moves them, they'll have something special. For now, enjoy the photos and the last two paragraphs of each lengthy, narrative driven review and pray for these young men's deliverance. Caveat: while the record reviews are generally on the mark they show absolutely no reflection and little concern for entertaining the reader. Avoid at all costs. (\$4.00 to Mark Jason Murray, Box 7853, Citrus Heights, CA 95621) ☹





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